

JACK HOXIE 1933

# BANDWAGON

The Journal of the Circus Historical Society

September-October 1988





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## THIS MONTH'S COVER

The entire personnel of the Ringling  
Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus Gold  
Unit posed for this group photo just be-  
fore the opening in Sapporo, Japan on  
July 1, 1988.

Producer Kenneth Feld and his wife  
Bonnie are standing just in front of the  
Unicorn float.

Photograph courtesy of Ringling  
Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Combined  
Shows, Inc.

Thanks to Bill Biggerstaff, stellar CHS  
member, for this and other color separa-  
tions in this issue.

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#### THE PRESIDENT COMMENTS

The generosity of Circus Historical Society members was overwhelming at dues time as a total of 195 individuals became Sustaining, Contributing, or Concessionaires Club members by paying \$25, \$50 or \$100 rather than the standard \$18 dues. This largess brought close to an extra \$3000 into the treasury, assuring us the necessary funds to publish the larger *Bandwagon* for another year and alleviating any need to raise dues in 1989. This incredible outpouring of support, representing about 12% of the entire membership, decimates the previous high of 127 contributors. On behalf of all members, I offer my sincere thanks to our benefactors.

This altruism pales in comparison to the gift made by the late Charles Simmons of Chicago and Pocatello, Idaho who willed his collection of circus memorabilia to the CHS. Although an active member of our organization, he is best remembered for the model circus wagon kits he marketed through Simmons Scale Models. He passed away

on June 1, 1986. Through the help of Mrs. Jeanne Simmons, his widow, the material arrived just in time to be shipped to Shelburne, Vermont for the auction at the convention. The auction raised \$4254, the majority of which came from posters, books, and other collectibles which were part of Simmons' gift. Never in its history has the CHS received a gift of this magnitude.

Such an extraordinary gesture deserves extraordinary recognition. The officers have therefore decided to dedicate this issue to the memory of Charles Simmons who loved the circus, circus model building and the Circus Historical Society. This one's for you, Charlie.

#### WELL KNOWN MEMBERS DIE

Gordon M. Potter, St. Joseph, Michigan, died on April 8, 1988, at age 79. Potter began making loading orders, tent sizes and equipment lists of circuses in the 1930s and 1940s. His

reference material has been used by circus historians since that time.

Leonard V. Farley, Cumberland, Rhode Island died on August 8, 1988, at age 79. Farley served as national historian of the Circus Fans of America and was at one time director of the Hertzberg Collection in San Antonio, Texas.

#### CORRECTION

The wrong photo appeared on page 22 of the July-August *Bandwagon*. The riding act identified as Mitzie, Rose, Betty and Jimmy Riefenach was actually Giustino Loyal and his sisters.

#### CHRISTMAS ADS

You can support an even larger Christmas special issue of the *Bandwagon* by taking a greetings advertisement. Send your copy, layout and check to the editor by December 1, 1988.

## CIRCUS PHOTOS



Tom Mix in his new 1930 Lincoln at Peru winterquarters. C-299

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# RINGLING-BARNUM CIRCUS

## The New Gold Unit In Japan

By Fred D. Pfening, Jr.

In July of 1988 the Greatest Show on Earth again went beyond the shores of the United States, taking a complete new circus to Japan, equal in size to the Red and Blue units.

This is the first time that Ringling Bros. & Barnum and Bailey Combined Shows has ventured out of the country under the Feld family ownership and the first time Ringling Bros. & Barnum and Bailey has showed under canvas since 1956. In the late 1970s they took the Monte Carlo Circus to Australia and Japan.

John Ringling North took a Christmas holiday show to Havana, Cuba numerous times in the 1950s and 60s. In 1957 a unit played Mexico City. But these were single engagements, played between the regular American touring seasons.

In 1961 a full blown second unit of the Ringling-Barnum circus played South America. Under the management of Paul Eagles it opened on February 15, 1961, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, appearing there through March 12. The show played Sao Paulo March 14 to April 8. It closed in Buenos Aires, Argentina after showing from April 14 to May 28. The South American tour was a forerunner of the European unit of the Ringling circus that played a number of cities on the continent during the winter of 1963-64. The European show,

The sixteen pole Ringling-Barnum Gold unit big top with entrance on the Sapporo lot in July 1988. Bob MacDougall photo.



Rehearsal inside the big top prior to the opening in Sapporo. The net was used by the cannon act. Bob MacDougall photo.

managed by Lloyd Morgan, opened in September 1963 in Lille, France, where it was framed. The wagons, lettered Ringling's Barnum and Bailey Circus, were built in Ronchin, France. The show played in Germany and Denmark before closing the tour in Rotterdam, the Netherlands on February 5, 1964. The wagons were left in Europe until brought to the United States to be used on the new Blue unit.

Under the Feld ownership the organization expanded into the operation of ice shows. By 1987 Kenneth Feld was touring two circuses and two ice shows in the United States as well as ice shows in Europe, South America and Japan. In addition he was presenting Siegfried & Roy in Las Vegas and playing a number of cities with a festival unit. He is without question the world's leading impresario, his various shows

The big top with additional center poles and middles on the Tokyo lot August 5, 1988. A different entrance was used there. Bill Whitney photo.







Five one hundred foot cranes were used on each side of the big top during the set up in Sapporo. Bob MacDougall photo.

playing to more people and grossing more money than an other producer of live shows around the globe.

Feld has toured an ice show in Europe for a number of years. The Magic Kingdom ice show was taken to Japan following a two year tour in the United States. The enthusiastic reception of the ice show in Japan prompted consideration of taking the Greatest Show on Earth to that country. Feld advised that after thorough investigation it was determined that there was a window of opportunity to take a circus to Japan. Arrangements were concluded with Japanese promotion partners that allowed the venture to be economically sound.

Rumors of a third Ringling unit began to surface in 1986. One story had the show planning an additional unit to play smaller buildings not suitable for the Red and Blue. Another story

Two of the three specially built elephant semi-trailers on the lot in Sapporo. Bob MacDougall photo.



One of the spec floats being unloaded by a forklift in Sapporo. The two animal tents are in the background. Bob MacDougall photo.

further discussions of technical questions. Fortunately by that time a layout of the show and equipment required was on paper ready for preliminary discussion.

Internal planning had been developed by Kenneth Feld that included moving Bob MacDougall to a new position as manager of winter quarters operations. MacDougall had served as manager of the Blue unit for eight years and of the Red unit for five years. MacDougall's move was announced after the Red unit closed the 1987 season in Nashville, Tennessee.

First priority in the Venice quarters at the end of 1987 was to get the new Blue unit show ready, followed by the opening of the Red unit in Miami. After both units were on the road all efforts were directed to the new third unit. Mike Fauls was appointed manager of

A group of elephants inside their tent. The steel frame tent construction can be seen. Bob MacDougall photo.







These containers carried the show office and machine shop. Bob MacDougall photo.

the international edition, now called the Gold unit.

A number of acts were selected and signed. Most of these were contracted for both "Circus Fantasy 88," at Disney World in Orlando, Florida and for the Gold unit.

By February 1 Fauls and MacDougall began serious work on the new show. The aerial frames from the Red unit and the retired single cannon were rebuilt as were the ring curbs from the Blue show. The opening and finale specs and wardrobe from the Blue show were refurbished. The Unicorn spec from prior years was pulled out of storage. The Hagenbeck-Wallace company began refurbishing the props. This division also built an entrance arch that served as a front door in Sapporo.

By March 1 MacDougall's train recycling department started on the specialized containers to transport the Gold unit. From March 1 to the end of May

These two containers housed the wild animal act. Small transfer cages, like those used on the Red and Blue units, were used to take the cats into the big top. Bob MacDougall photo.



the winter quarters was a beehive of activity, with as many as four containers under construction at one time, causing the quarters to look like a modular freight terminal. With the storage semis, ice show units and rental containers there were thirty to fifty forty-foot units around the quarters property.

Mike Fauls arranged with a firm in San Jose, California to provide the lighting equipment. The lighting system was put together in California and shipped to Florida in two forty foot semis and one twenty-four foot straight truck. The Venice arena building was very close to the configuration of the tent to be used in Japan, so all of the equipment was assembled and set up. It was decided not to rehearse the show in quarters, although the show girls did rehearse in Burbank, California prior to leaving for the Orient.

Some changes were made as the framing of the show continued, the biggest being dropping of the planned German tent to be made by Hocker Tent Company, and the seating, air conditioning and heating equipment by an English company in favor of a Japanese high tech tent. The Japanese partners advised that the Ogawa Tent Company would supply a tent capable of standing a ninety mile per hour wind and a five inch snow load.

Eleven cages for the wild animal act were shipped to the Red unit in Hartford, Connecticut, for the transfer of the Larry Allen Dean act to Japan. Three elephant semis were constructed and shipped to Bobby Moore in Detroit where Moore had assembled the elephants that were added to his herd for the Gold unit. Two R. V. trailers, to be used as dressing rooms, were sent to the port of Savannah. Generator, office, and shop containers were completed and shipped to Tampa, as were the Sells-Floto concession office and equipment containers. All of this was done in May.

Some of the con-



A crane was used to remove the 60,000 pound generator container from the transport truck. Bob MacDougall photo.

tainers were typical sea-land box units, others were semi-trailers. The show-owned containers were to later receive 4 by 16 foot Ringling-Barnum title boards.

Rental containers and trailers were loaded and shipped to Tampa. These included:

1-Clown props; 2-Ring rubber mats and five cages; 3-Floats and props; 4-Props and stages; 5-Floats and stages; 6-Wardrobe boxes; 7-Lighting equipment; 8-Lighting and sound equipment; 9-Track rubber and ring curbs; 10-Ford tractor and cannon; 11- Wardrobe boxes and miscellaneous; 12-Wardrobe boxes; 13-Lighting equipment and 14-Rigging and frames.

A Ford tractor and Espania flying act equipment container was shipped to New Orleans. A tractor and container with eleven wild animal cages brought from the Red unit and two empty containers were driven to California. The sound equipment was shipped by United Van Lines to California and was there transferred along with additional lighting equipment to a container.

After working 14 to 16 hour days, seven days a week, Bob MacDougall and his crew built an entirely new circus completed and ready for transport to Japan. A total of thirty four containers and semi-trailers were used to transport it to Japan. Equipment shipped from various United States ports converged on Japan about the same time. Equipment that had been shipped to the west coast from various parts of the



United States was loaded in the empty containers for transport to Japan.

The equipment arrived on schedule. The containers were removed from the ship by cranes and placed on leased Japanese semis equipped to carry sea containers over the road. After arrival on the the big Japanese island the equipment was ferried to the island of Hokaido for the stand in Sapporo.

Cranes were then hired to place the containers on the grounds in Sapporo. Additional Japanese containers were hired upon arrival to carry units like the cannon, wild animal transfer cages and the R. V. trailers. A number of forklifts were used on the Sapporo lot to unload and spot the cannon, cages, wardrobe boxes, and other smaller containers stored inside the larger shipping containers.

The elephants arrived a day late for the ferry to Sapporo and it was necessary to keep them on the dock for a few days until the next ferry to the other island. This created some interesting problems with Japanese officials. Local officials required extensive preparation of the elephant manure prior to its being placed in dumpsters. It had to be bagged and laced with lime and tied in a plastic container. This cumbersome dumpster preparation was necessary during the entire Japan tour.

The square cornered red and yellow vinyl Japanese tent was most unusual in construction and appearance. At the opening stand in Sapporo two rows of eight seventy foot center poles were used. There were no quarter poles. The side poles were bolted to concrete footers. The top was guyed out with three quarter inch steel cable anchored to turnbuckles in concrete. The suspended construction allowed a massive open area resembling the expanse of a large building like Madison Square Garden. The big top covered 1.5 acres, was over fifty feet high and sat 8,000. Ten 100 foot cranes, five on each side, were used to erect the tent. The performing area was 80 by 180 feet. Over 200 light fixtures were used, including 172 spots. All lighting for the show was remote controlled.

The big top was air conditioned. A heating system will replace the air conditioning as the weather grows colder in October and November.

Two additional large tents were also used, one for the elephants and one for horses, ponies and lead stock. The animal tents were of a steel frame construction with green vinyl stretched over the frames. Both of the animal tents had exhaust fans.

Individual dressings rooms were used. They were also air conditioned, carpeted

and had running water.

The lot in Sapporo was extremely tight, being part of a large food festival. The set up required extensive discussions and negotiations regarding the amount of space allocated to the circus by local officials. Space allowed for the circus equipment was measured in meters with precise measurements being made.

The midway entrance to the big top was spotted on the long side of the tent. Patrons walked through a "front" somewhat like those used on American carnivals. The Ringling-Barnum logo, showing the Greatest Show on Earth globe was painted in red and blue on the yellow entrance structure. Red and white stripped concession sales tents flanked the big top between the entrance and the tent.

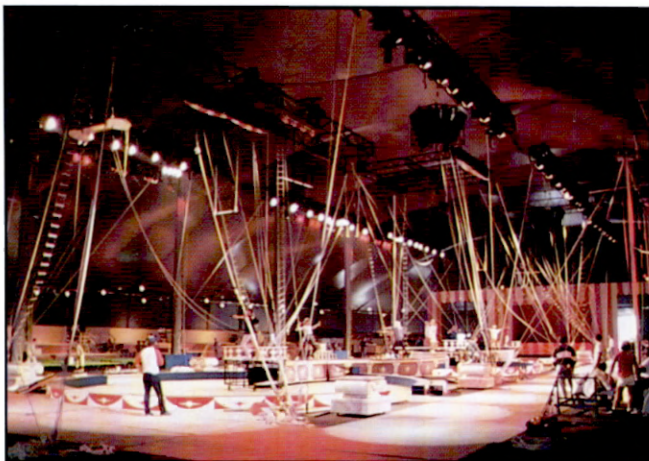
The concession tents were originally to be placed inside the tent between the back of the seats and the side poles, but it was found on set up that the seating had been enlarged and backed up against the side wall. Portable toilets were also placed outside the tent near the entrance.

Bob and Pauline MacDougall were in Sapporo during the set up. Bob returned to the United States before the show opened. Pauline remained longer to assist the wardrobe department.

The show rehearsed for two weeks prior to the opening night on July 1. Producer Kenneth Feld was on hand to make sure his circus was of the same high standards as the Red and Blue units.

The opening performance was attended by press representatives from around the world. The Japanese were overwhelmed by the massive presentation. They had seen small circuses in Japan but nothing to compare to the Greatest Show on Earth. The Japanese were seeing a circus equal to that presented in Madison Square Garden.

Feld was very pleased with his new



The inside of the big top just prior to the opening in Sapporo. The extensive lighting equipment and rigging can be seen. Bob MacDougall photo.

effort. He and Mrs. Feld hosted an elaborate party for the cast and crew following the opening performance. A few days later on the 4th of July the Japanese promotion partner, Mr. Morioka, arranged for a banquet at the Sapporo Brewery Hall for the Ringling showfolks. Ringmaster Denny McGuire lead the group in singing God Bless America at the end of the evening.

The show used a free act for publicity on the lot prior to the opening in Sapporo as one of the Carrillo brothers did a skywalk on a cable suspended between center poles above the big top.

The arrival of the Ringling show in Japan did not go unnoticed in the United States. Extensive television coverage appeared on Entertainment Tonight and the Today Show.

A wire service story appeared in

The canvas covered container semi-trailers in background carried wardrobe boxes. The boxes were rolled out of the semis on a ramp. Bob MacDougall photo.





newspapers throughout the United States on June 28. The story reported that Ringling-Barnum, known in Japan as Ringu-Ringu Burathazu ando Bahnamu ando Bairee Sahkasu, would soon open in Sapporo. The show was taking no chances about the language as singing ringmaster McGuire had taken a crash course in Japanese and delivered his lines in that language. Over 100 tractor-trailer trucks had delivered the equipment, twenty five clowns, a fourteen piece band, sixteen elephants, fourteen lions and an assortment of horses, ponies, camels, llamas and humans for "the three ring assault on the Japanese imagination."

Producer Kenneth Feld was quoted, "I think they'll get a kick out of it. It's so visual, it's not a language thing that they will have to understand." Feld also said; "Creating the overseas troupe as a supplement to Ringling's two permanent American tours cost \$10 million." He hoped to pack in the Japanese even at ticket prices equivalent to about \$40 a head, and he is planning a 25 week tour in 1989.

Feld continued, "The Japanese people have a lot of money, and they work five days a week now instead of six, there's no reason we can't have a circus in Japan six months of the year." Feld was not concerned about day and dating the Soviet Union's Bolshoi Circus. He said with a shrug, "Hey!, when you're the Greatest Show on Earth. . . ."

After a nine day layoff the show opened in Tokyo on August 6. A different Japanese promotional partner handled this date. The lot in Tokyo, on a blacktopped railroad yard, was much larger and allowed the full tent to be used. Twenty two center poles were used there accommodating additional middles and considerably increased seating capacity. In Tokyo the entrance was placed at the end of the tent. A different entrance was used that was much wider than the one used in Sapporo. Concession stock containers were placed on either side of the entrance way adding flash as the patrons arrived on the midway. The Ringling Bros. & Barnum and Bailey logo was painted in English on the concession units. The red and white concession tops were again used for sale of novelty and food items.

The lot in Tokyo was located near the Ginza area, the main shopping street in the Japanese capital. The show person-

nel were housed at a hotel a few blocks from the lot. Circus personnel were delighted to find a number of American fast food stores in the area. Being responsible for their own meals the showfolks had been shocked at the cost of food in Japan.

The circus opened in Sapporo, July 1 and remained there until July 24. The Tokyo date was from August 6 to September 30. The final stand in Osaka will be from October 9 to October 30.



The long mount on the hippodrome track during the elephant number during a Tokyo performance. Bill Whitney photo.

The show will return to the United States at the conclusion of the tour. An entirely new performance will return to Japan in March of 1989.

The Gold unit performance as seen by Bill Whitney on August 6, 1988 in Tokyo was as follows:

Motorcycle Globe, Jose Media; Clown cable car; Liberty horses presented by Cindy Herriott, John Herriott and Carelee Greene; Display with Luis Munoz, dobermans, Roger and Pam Zoppe, chimps, Bill Schreiber's Shepherd dogs; Grasshopper bike, clown number.

Display with: Hassani Troupe, Moroccan tumblers, Kehaoui Troupe, tetterboard; Parvonovi Troupe, tetterboard; Clown walk around; Wheel of Death, by Espana; Living Unicorn Spec; Intermis-

Display with Luis Munoz, low wire, Contortion on front track and juggling on back track; Larry Allen Dean, lions; Clown bikes on track.

Display with Franconi Duo, double hoop, Cindy Herriott, cloud swing, Ariane Duo, cradle; Western theme clown

gag. Display with Marie Perry, hula hoops; Anastasini Bros., risley, Desi Parvonovi, hula hoops; Clown walk around.

Flying act display with two Espana flying acts; Clown chase; Elephant display in all three rings presented by Bob and Betsy Moore, Scott Riddle and Smokey Jones. The Carrillo Bros., high wire; Luis Munoz, human cannonball; Finale.

The animal inventory includes sixteen horses; two camels; two llamas; two unicorns; seven ponies; nineteen dogs; eight chimpanzees and fourteen lions. The sixteen elephants are: Minnie, Mysore, Calcutia, Dolly, Asia, Reba, Dame, Nellie, Emma, Tonka, Luna, Smokey, Jack, Malika, Solomon and Mugsie.

The staff as listed in the program is as follows: Kenneth Feld, producer; Larry Billman, stager; Arthur Boccia, costume designer; Reid Carlson, scenic designer; Bob Dickinson, lighting designer; Tim Holst, associate producer; Roy Luthringer, choreographer; Stephanie Stromer, assistant choreographer; Simon Miles, assistant lighting designer; Bill

Pruyn, musical director; Keith Greene, musical conductor; Mike Fauls, general manager; Charly Baumann, executive performance director; Peggy Williams, performance director; Quinn Coleman, assistant performance director; John Herriott, equestrian director; Joseph Z. Gold, marketing advisor; Christopher Hudert, clown alley manager; Ron Severini, clown production; Frosty Little, clown production; Kathy Hayes, dancer line captain; Larry Richardson, technical coordinator; Greg Suzuki, unit controller; Christine Cross, office manager; Barrie Ryan, head technician; Steve Nichol, purchasing coordinator; Ed Cox, wardrobe boss; Bill Atkins, lighting director Scott Dane, assistant lighting director; Richard Mozo, sound technician; Gerhard Richter, ring boss; Mark Wilson, ring boss and Bill Seeley, ring boss.

Props and scenic effects by Hagenbeck-Wallace. Lighting design by the Klages Group, Inc. Sound by Meyer Sound. Costumes by Eaves-Brooks Costume Manufacturing Corporation.

The author thanks the Ringling-Barnum Circus, Bob MacDougall, Al House, Cindy Herriott and Bill Whitney for contributing material and photographs for this article.



# JACK HOXIE

## BIG 3 RING

# CIRCUS

SEASON OF 1937 BY JOSEPH T. BRADURY

The Jack Hoxie Big 3 Ring Circus that toured in 1937 was a short lived show, like a number of others in the 1930s. It was well organized with an experienced management, featured an outstanding attraction in the well known movie cowboy, Jack Hoxie, had a pleasing well balanced program, an excellent advance and first class equipment, including new canvas, seats, and a fleet of semis with professional drivers. But following the tradition of western motion picture stars who tried it on their own in the circus and wild west show business the Jack Hoxie show lasted but five months.

The two principals of the enterprise were Jack Hoxie and Cly Newton. The show was built from the ground up at the small Georgia village of Raymond. The title of Jack Hoxie Big 3 Ring Circus was selected and the show on opening day was in the medium motorized class.

Jack Hoxie was born in Oklahoma in 1888 according to some biographers, but when he died in 1965 his age was given as 80 which would place his birth a few years earlier. He grew up as a cowhand and as early as 1911 made his first appearance in motion pictures. About the same time he also got his first taste of outdoor show business and is said to have been with the Kit Carson Wild West Show. Some accounts put him with the first Miller and Arlington 101 Ranch Wild West Show. In 1929 he went big time wild west by



joining the Miller Bros. 101 Ranch. He filled in again on that show for Tom Mix part of 1931 after the latter's breach of contract. In 1931 Hoxie was on Schell Bros., in 1933-34 on Charles Sparks' Downie Bros., in 1935 he was

The Jack Hoxie Circus on a lot early in the 1937 season. All illustrations are from the Pfening Archives unless otherwise noted.

Jack Hoxie in a poster issued by Arrow Star Pictures, the motion picture company that produced his movies. Ohio State University Theater Collection.

with Harley Sadler's Bailey Bros. and in 1936 he was again the main attraction on the Downie show.

The first time I saw Jack Hoxie in person was on Downie Bros. in 1933 and felt he made a most impressive appearance. During those years I considered myself at age 12 an "expert" in the field of what we now call Class B Westerns and never missed the Saturday "horse opera" at the local movie house. Jack Hoxie was a cut below the leaders, Ken Maynard, Buck Jones, Tim McCoy and Hoot Gibson, and of course the "King" of them all, Tom Mix; however, the later was more of a silent screen star and although well remembered soon took somewhat of a back seat when the new fangled talkies took over. Hoxie was on a par with the second echelon of cowboy stars, Tom Tyler, Buck Owens and Bill Cody, all of this group also appeared with circuses in the early-mid 1930s. Hoxie's wife, Dixie Starr, was his leading lady in films as well as in the circus.

I saw Jack Hoxie on Downie Bros. again in 1936 and as I recall his appearance was much the same as three years earlier. Actually, in the big show program he did nothing more than make several rides around the hippo-







drome track mounted on his horse. This was standard procedure of all the movie cowboys with circuses in those days. Their main job was in the after show, or concert, where sometimes they performed trick roping, riding, and even marksmanship, but the latter presented problems inside a tent. In 1937 it was advertised that Hoxie and his cast would act out certain scenes from his movies in the aftershow.

The second principal personality behind the Jack Hoxie Circus was Cly Newton and it seems he may have been the guiding force behind the framing of the show, but even so Jack Hoxie was completely in on the action as the new show was put together.

Cly Newton had been with circuses most of his life having been the son of William (Honest Bill) Newton, Jr., who was the son of William (Lucky Bill) Newton, Sr. According to the *Billboard* "Biographical Form" filled out by Honest Bill Newton personally in 1932, which is in the Circus World Museum, he started on his father's show, Lucky Bill Shows, as a roughneck, later a performer, and was up to manager in 1903. He started his own Honest Bill Shows in the early 1900's and claimed he was the first to use motor trucks for transportation, this coming in 1911. Other titles which he operated were Orange Bros. in the 1920s and a combination, Orange Bros. and Moon Bros. In 1931 he became associated with Walter L. Main in touring a circus bearing the Main title. On several occasions in the 1930's Newton teamed up with Walter L. Main.

Now to Cly Newton again. W. F. (Dub) Duggan, Jr., former circus owner, as was his father before him, recently said that his father and mother were very good friends of Cly and Violet Newton and he knew them well during the time of the Jack Hoxie show.

Dixie Starr and Jack Hoxie on the day the Hoxie show opened in La-Grange, Georgia in 1937. Eddie Jackson photo.

Dub said that Honest Bill had married Mother Newton, as she was called in the show world, and adopted all of her four children, two boys, Cly and Horace, and two girls, Birdie and Bernice. Mother Newton had operated a boarding house in which Honest Bill lived during the off seasons in Ada, Oklahoma. In 1937 when the Hoxie show was framed, Cly, the oldest of the Newton children was 33 and Horace, the youngest was 21 and just out of college. Horace joined the Hoxie show as concession manager and Mother Newton also spent some time on the show.

Cly had held important positions with his father's show for fully ten seasons. In 1926 he was side show manager of the Orange Bros. and Moon Bros. Combined Circus. In 1931 he was advertising car manager of Walter L. Main and in 1935 and 1936 he was side show manager of the Main circus.

A notation in the July 31, 1936 *Billboard* said that "Cly C. Newton, son of 'Honest Bill' Newton, Jr. owner of the Orange Bros. and Moon Bros. Combined Shows, and Violet Moore, of Ada, Oklahoma were married July 17 at Milwaukee, Wisconsin."

The first public notice of the new Hoxie show came in form of an advertisement in the

February 13, 1937 *Billboard*. It read: "Wanted For Jack Hoxie Circus. Presenting Jack Hoxie and Dixie Starr in person. People in all departments from General Agent to the back stake line of the big top.. Address all communications to Ada, Oklahoma. Cly Newton, Manager."

This was the last time Newton's home address was used for the Hoxie show. All further ads and reports used the Raymond, Georgia quarters location.

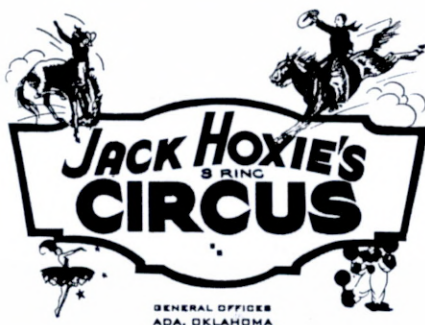
The small Georgia community of Raymond was not unknown to the Newton family as during the winter of 1934-35 Honest Bill Newton framed a new version of the Honest Bill Circus there. Of course Cly was present during this time. The show went out in 1935 under the Honest Bill title but after only a few weeks the title was changed to Walter L. Main in one of several partnerships William Newton, Jr. had with Walter L. Main over the years.

Raymond is located some six miles from Newman in Coweta County, about forty miles southwest of Atlanta. In 1937, although there were only a few homes housing less than a hundred souls in the entire community, the town was an important railroad junction. It was located on the Griffin-Chattanooga line of the Central of Georgia Railroad. Another line ran south from Raymond seventy-two miles to Columbus. Through freight and passenger trains moved from Atlanta to Newman on trackage rights from the Atlanta and West Point, then east on the Central of Georgia Griffin-Chattanooga line, then south on the line to Columbus. There were two passenger trains each way going from Atlanta to Columbus in the mid 1930's, one of which carried a through Pullman to Washington, D.C. Also there were

The Hoxie ticket truck during the 1937 tour. Jim Dunwoody collection.







JACK HOXIE, PRODUCER  
CLY NEWTON, MANAGER  
R. M. HARVEY, GENERAL AGENT

GENERAL OFFICES  
ADA, OKLAHOMA

one or more freights. On the Griffin-Chattanooga line there was a passenger train each way plus one or two freights. So even though there was little or no other action in town there was still considerable excitement at the depot each day. When the Jack Hoxie show was organized and built in the winter and early spring of 1937 that event became most important in the eyes of the locals.

Of course the excellent rail network was of little importance to the new Jack Hoxie show since it was to be motorized, but Raymond, located on secondary roads, was still only a few miles from Newman and connection with U.S. Highway 29, a major route running from the northeast towards the Gulf Coast and port cities of Mobile, Pensacola and New Orleans. Going north it led to the big cities along the eastern seaboard.

The selection of Raymond as the site for framing the new show meant it would be in the center of considerable circus activities throughout the region in the winter of 1936-37. On an area map if you drew a circle out a hundred miles you would find in quarters in Macon, Georgia the Downie Bros. Circus, the show Jack Hoxie had been with in 1936, and at Anniston, Alabama would be the Tom Mix show. Mix and Downie had been the two largest motorized circuses on the road in 1936. (Author's note. I have always felt 1936 was one of my more memorable circus seasons as I had caught both shows, Downie in April, Mix in September.) Extending the circle a short distance more, you find in quarters at Milledgeville, Georgia Jimmy Heron's Famous Robbins Circus and over in Alabama at Montgomery the Walter L. Main show, where Cly Newton had been in 1936. Still further out there would be the Mighty Haag Show at Marianna, Florida. Over in South Carolina at York Ray Rogers' show was getting ready to go out with a new title, Wallace Bros.,

Letterhead used by the first Hoxie show in 1937 listed Jack Hoxie, producer, Cly Newton, manager and R. M. Harvey, general agent. The address listed was Ada, Oklahoma.

while up in Tennessee at Lafayette, Haag Bros., another new show, would be in the process of being framed, and at Jackson in quarters would be Ray Marsh Brydon's circus, using the Dan Rice title.

Although there were no announcements in the *Billboard* concerning the

Hoxie newspaper ad used for the Harrisonburg, Virginia stand. Circus World Museum collection.

**THE CIRCUS IS COMING**


---

ONE DAY ONLY  
**FRIDAY**  
HARRISONBURG

**MAY 7**

3 PERFORMANCES—8 P. M.—4 P. M.

CONRAD SHOW GROUNDS



**JACK  
HOXIE**

**BIG 3-RING  
CIRCUS**

AMERICA'S NEWEST BIG CIRCUS

---

100 PEOPLE  
100 ARENIC ACTS  
BY DANCING HORSES  
TRAINED WILD ANIMALS  
HERD OF ELEPHANTS  
ASTOUNDING ACROBATS  
CLOWNS GALORE  
1001 WONDERS

A FEATURE OF FEATURES  
**JACK HOXIE**  
Screen Star in Person, Supported by His Leading Lady of the Films  
**DIXIE STARR**  
and His Wonder Horse  
**"SCOUT"**

new Hoxie show there were a number of advertisements in April. In the April 3 issue, a bannerman, musicians, aerial and wire acts to feature, clowns, side show ticket sellers who made second opening, dancing girls, working men in all departments, billers, cowboy musicians, wild west performers, wild horses were wanted, and there was a floss privilege for lease. Those interested were to contact Cly C. Newton, Raymond, Georgia. Another larger ad came the following week which read, "Jack Hoxie Big 3 Ring Circus Wants. All round billers, address Mike Pyne. Big show performers, address George L. Myers, equestrian director. Musicians for big show band, especially strong circus cornet and clarinet doubling saxophone, address Bennie Waters.

"Side show people, ticket sellers for second openings. Address Leon Bennett.

"Buckner wants big top canvasman, seat men and pole riggers. Come on. All others address Elmer Jones, General Superintendent, All communications Raymond, Georgia. Show opens April 16."

The Elmer Jones listed in the ad as general superintendent indeed was "the" Elmer Jones, veteran circus owner who in 1936 had operated a two car, Cooper Bros. Circus in Canada. Few in the business could claim greater longevity than him. Although Jones' primary experience had been with small, gilly type rail shows, he was an excellent choice for this important position and came aboard early to assist the building of the circus in quarters.

We are fortunate in securing the testimony of Roger Boyd, well known retired circus personality especially remembered for his many seasons as equestrian director back in the 1960's and 70's of the Clyde Beatty-Cole Bros. Circus. When the Hoxie show was organized Boyd was a youngster who had first entered the circus game in 1930 when he joined up with Jimmy Heron's Downie Bros. Circus. He spent several seasons in the early 1930's with Heron and in 1936 had been with his Famous Robbins show, now in quarters in Milledgeville.

Boyd claims he was the first person hired for the new show by Jack Hoxie who found him in Macon, Georgia shortly after Hoxie had closed with Downie Bros. and was staying in that city. Boyd was the first employee to reach quarters in Raymond. He describes the place as a little crossroad town with a country store and post office combined and a half dozen houses. Hoxie and his wife, Dixie, occupied the better



of the houses and all of the seats and stringers were built in the yard of their house. The rest of the show was built in an old empty two story frame store building that also served as a bunkhouse and cook-house. He was named property boss and served as an "all around man" both in quarters and later on the road.

Boyd describes the Jack Hoxie show as being all new from the front to the back, including brand new canvas and new double deck side show bannerline from United States Tent and Awning. He says it was a truly beautiful show very similar to the Charles Sparks' owned Downie Bros. Circus.

Another recollection of Boyd's is that at the start they had only a few trucks so more vehicles and drivers were leased from a fruit hauling outfit in Florida. He recalls that the Hoxie manager, Cly Newton, was a very likable young man who at the time was in his early 30's. He also remembers Cly's younger brother, Horace, just out of college who managed the concessions. Unfortunately, a few years later the younger Newton was killed in World War II.

Dub Duggan remembers the deal the Hoxie show made to lease the trucks and drivers. He says that when they were framing the show there was a man living in Mount Dora, Florida, who always took credit for inventing the present day semi-truck and trailer. His name was Owen Conrad and he built them in a big truck yard in Mount Dora and used them to haul citrus to the northern markets.

"I remember him explaining his principle to me as a young boy," recalls Duggan. "he would say that anything could pull more than it could haul, so with that he built about a twenty foot trailer with a tail light on it. There were no clearance lights or turn signals. The trailer was built out of steel stringers and the rest was wood.

"My dad talked Owen into using I think twelve trucks and taking them to the Hoxie show and that is what it moved on. For the day it was supposed to be the best moved show ever on the road up until that time with the ex-fruit trucks and professional drivers." The remainder of



Adele Nelson and her elephants in LaGrange, Georgia, opening date of the Jack Hoxie Circus. Eddie Jackson photo.

the show's motorized equipment was Walter L. Main surplus or purchased elsewhere. Jack Hoxie also contributed a couple of trucks to move his family, props and horses.

In addition to securing the equipment, vehicles and props for the show, personnel were hired, and acts signed for the performance during the time the show was in the Raymond quarters. A significant act secured was the well known Louis Reed-Adele Nelson elephants. There were three, Myrtle, Tillie and Jenny which were trained by Reed and presented by his wife, Adele. The act called the "Adele Nelson Elephants," was first class in every way, and provided its own transportation.

Two years previous Honest Bill had opened in Raymond but this time the opener was set for LaGrange, Georgia, a much larger city, on April 16. Everything was in readiness with all of the new canvas, leased vehicles, and performers on hand.

Semi-trailer used to transport the Adele Nelson Elephants on the Hoxie lot in LaGrange, Georgia.



The May 1, 1937 *Billboard* carried a wonderfully complete review of the Hoxie opening, the type article researchers love to find, as all essentials are covered, staff, personnel, equipment and program. It read as follows:

"HOXIE PROGRAM IS MERITORIOUS. New organization managed by Cly C. Newton-Billroy opposition at opening.

"LaGrange, Ga. April 24-Jack Hoxie Circus, a new show, got off to a favorable start with performances here April 16.

"Organized and assembled in a comparatively few weeks, show is remarkable in that it has no details unattended, a smooth-working compact staff, first rate equipment and a meritorious performance.

"Credit for the successful launching of the new enterprise is largely due Cly C. Newton, who despite his youthful years is recognized as an able circus executive, and Jack Hoxie, who in addition to being the featured performer, has a business interest in the show.

"The show was organized and made ready for the road at Raymond, a small Coweta County town, about thirty-five miles northwest of here. Jump was made to LaGrange day before opening. At dress rehearsal first night high windstorm swept section and the new big top suffered some damage. Extraordinary measures were required to keep top in air.

"Show had a day-and-date opposition with Billroy's Comedians at opening. Matinee was capacity and about two-thirds full at night. Shows were on lots on opposite sides of town. Members of Billroy's personnel were guests at matinee performance.

"Performance is given in three rings. New top, made by U. S. Tent and Awning Company, is 90 with three 40-foot middle pieces. Reserves are 'star backs.' New marquee is unusually attractive.

"Department Heads

"Newton and Hoxie have assembled a staff of seasoned executives. Elmer Jones, who had the Cooper Bros. railroad show in Canada last year, is general superintendent. George L. Myers, former equestrian director of Sells-Floto and King shows, is in charge of performance. F. L.





(Kokomo) Anders is legal adjuster and Al Martin, assistant.

"Hoxie and Newton are co-owners, Newton is manager and other staff members include Harry V. Winslow, general agent; Jay Abernathy, contracting agent; L. Verne Slout, contracting press agent; Mike Pyne, manager advertising cars; Ray Swanner, 24-hour agent; J. W. Simms, banner advertising; C. C. Smith, treasurer; Ivan Starr, auditor and in charge of tax box; Mrs. William Newton, superintendent front door; Owen Conrad, superintendent transportation; Herbert Bishop, master mechanic; Bennie Waters, musical director; L. L. Buckner, superintendent big top canvas; Louis Reed, superintendent elephants; Horace Newton, superintendent privileges; James Moran, superintendent inside tickets, Jerry Starr, assistant; Roger Boyd, superintendent of properties.

"Leon Bennett is side show manager; Neal McRae and Billy Stiles are on side show ticket boxes; E. H. Alexander, bandmaster, with nine musicians, and Don Taylor, inside lecturer. Taylor also does Punch and Judy. Attractions in kid show include Alexander's Minstrels; Carman, mentalist; Hopkins Royal Highlanders, Scotch troupe; Chief Brown Sugar and Indian Village; dancing girls in annex. Adele Nelson's elephants are in side show when not performing in big top. Veteran Wingy Sanders has sideshow canvas.

"Steve Burke, who has been Hoxie's assistant for nine years, painted the show at Raymond and there is an attractive color scheme. Show travels on approximately thirty-five trucks, mostly Internationals and GMC machines.

"Bennie Waters' band furnished peppy musical score for big show performance. Personnel includes Waters, director; Spud Slovensky, Carl Wooler, Carl McCollough, cornets; Eddie Kreibel, George Yates, clarinets; Al Fuller, E. C. Brown, trombones; Tom Ross, baritone; John O'Hara, Chop Elstone, basses; Frank Oppie, Louis Shaw, drums.

"Show performance is well dressed.

The Jack Hoxie Circus big top in La-Grange, Georgia. Eddie Jackson photo.

Myers, who also is announcer, is faultlessly attired in top hat and evening clothes, and every act is well costumed.

#### "The Program

"Opening tournament has entire personnel of performers, led by Dixie Starr, and is followed by introduction of Jack Hoxie.

"Hoxie performs in new elaborately hand-carved gold and silver saddle made for him by a El Paso saddlemaker at a cost of \$3,600. Also Hoxie is using two special-made silver revolvers, presented to him by the Colt pistol people.

"No. 2-Jess Franklin and Irene Parker in novelty adagio act in center ring.

"No. 3-Nagel's dogs in center ring.

"No. 4-Jimmie Gordon on rolling globe in Ring 1, and Pat and Willa LeVolo in feats of balancing, Ring 3.

"No. 5-Clowns, Joe Franklin trio and Huffy Hoffman.

"No. 6-Edward Cuen's ponies in center ring.

"No. 7-Fred Gordon, frog contortion number, Ring 3; Clowns, Ring 1.

"No. 8-Clowns on hippodrome track.

"No. 9-Chauncey Barth, tetterboard act, in center ring, with Josephine Barth and Jess Franklin.

"No. 10-Concert announcement. In

Jack Hoxie used this truck and trailer to carry his equipment and horse. Photo taken in Somerset, Pennsylvania.



lineup; Bolder Landry, truck roper; Shorty Moore, bronk rider; Red Cunningham, bronk rider; Vic Clark, trick rider; Chief Brown Sugar and nine Indians.

"No. 11-Marie Gordon, chair balancing, Ring 1; Neal McCrea, balancing, Ring 3.

"No. 12-Huffy Hoffman, Funny Ford, and clowns.

"No. 13-Barth, perch act in center ring.

"No. 14-Charles Gordon trio on Roman ladders in center ring.

"No. 15-Bolder Landry, wire act, Ring 1; Pat and Willa LeVolo, bicycle and wire act, Ring 3.

"No.16-Jack Hoxie and Dixie Starr in second concert announcement.

"No.17-Neal McCrea, cloud swing in center ring.

"No. 18-Clown number.

"No. 19-Adele Nelson's elephants (three), presented by Adele Nelson and Louis Reed.

"Show executives announced several other acts will join next week. Show moved from here to Carrollton, Georgia, about 45 miles, and is headed north into East Tennessee and West Virginia.

"One of the busiest men on the lot is Ivan Starr, brother of Dixie Starr [Mrs. Hoxie], who is experiencing first season as a circus executive, although he trouped as a wire performer with the Butters act on Downie show last year.

"W. F. Duggan, owner of the Duggan Bros. Circus, which was on the road a few seasons ago [1934], motored 650 miles from Miami to witness the opening. His friend, Cly Newton, pressed him into service on front door account of the big crowd at matinee.

"Merchants' tickets were used in La-Grange and will be used by Hoxie show at 'selected stands' during the season, it was explained.

"Several car loads of well wishers came over from Macon. These visitors included Eddie Jackson, who left to join the Big Show advance the day afterwards: E. L. Mallard, Robert Spear, retired Brookline, Mass. banker and





One of the Nelson elephants is shown during the erection of the Hoxie big top in Somerset, Pennsylvania.

circus fan, and Paul M. Conway, Macon attorney."

Roger Boyd recalls that another act that was added to the program was Ora and Minervas, bar act, and also later Red Lunsford joined the large wild west contingent. He also remembered that the show carried no menagerie other than the Adele Nelson elephants which were kept in the sideshow.

Many reports mentioned how well painted and decorated the show's equipment was but the particular color scheme is not given. Photos indicate vehicles were probably painted red with white lettering. Units were titled "Jack Hoxie Big 3 Ring Circus." Although semis abounded, the office-ticket truck was a straight bed as were several others, including the vehicles Jack Hoxie personally used. Hauling the elephants was a large semi neatly lettered, "Adele Nelson's Dancing Elephants." The several complete lot photos printed here picture a good sized motorized circus with new canvas for the major tents. Comparing big top sizes among the nation's largest motorized shows, as indicated, the Jack Hoxie tent was a 90 foot round with three 40s. At that time Downie Bros. had a 120 with three 40s and Tom Mix boasted a huge, railroad size tent, a 150 foot round with three 50s.

The show made liberal use of newspaper cuts which featured its star, Jack Hoxie, and his horse. A beautiful line of paper was posted in advance of the show's stands. A number of the designs by Riverside Printing were originally used by the Miller Bros. 101 Ranch Wild West which went broke in 1931. The Hoxie title was cross lined over the Miller name on the sheets. A number of "old fashioned" stock designs from Riverside were also used. Other paper was purchased from Central Show Print.

The actual financial arrangement be-

tween Newton and Hoxie at the start of the season is somewhat confusing. At times *Billboard* articles mentioned Jack Hoxie and Cly Newton as co-owners. Other times it implied Newton was principal owner and that Hoxie only had a financial interest in the

show. With no official records to pursue and the fact that neither of the two principals were interviewed on the matter we can only surmise what the deal was. As this narrative progresses we shall learn that in reality there were "two" Jack Hoxie circuses during the 1937 season, the second is much clearer as to the financial arrangements than is the first. In all probability Cly Newton at the beginning was considered the owner and put his name to the time payment contract to purchase the canvas as well as lease the vehicles. Hoxie was given a generous salary, percentage of profits consideration, and possibly a piece of the show itself. In all likelihood the show was under financed with the time payments becoming an increasingly difficult burden.

Leaving LaGrange the show headed northward in Georgia with the second stand coming at Carrollton, April 17. There the route becomes "lost" until the show turned up in Virginia in early May. We have been unable to locate the complete route but have pieced together information on various stands played from the Circus World Museum files, those of the late Issac Marcks (courtesy of Don Marcks), and information found in the *Billboard*. After leaving the opening date it was noted the show would go northward through Georgia, into East Tennessee, and the western part of Virginia. The next bit of route is found in a large two column ad in the May 8, 1937 *Billboard* which read as follows:

"JACK HOXIE CIRCUS WANTS. Performers for big show. Aerial acts to feature

and animal acts, including monkey, seal, elephant and horse acts. Opening for A-1 neatly framed pit show, musicians for big show, experienced circus cornet, clarinet doubling saxophone. For side show, oriental dancing girls, also colored musicians, workmen all departments. Join on wire. Address Manager, Jack Hoxie Circus, as per route; May 6 Lexington, Va; May 7 Harrisonburg; May 8 Woodstock, Va; May 10 Hagerstown, Md."

The route was a popular one with many circuses and the Hoxie outfit is certain to have encountered opposition along the way. The 1937 season saw a great number of shows going out, as many as the previous year.

The 1937 roster shows four railroad circuses, Ringling-Barnum on 90 cars, Cole Bros.-Clyde Beatty on 40, Hagenbeck-Wallace on 35 and Al G. Barnes-Sells-Flot on 30. The same number of railers had gone out in 1936 but there was a vast difference. The previous year Hagenbeck-Wallace had remained in quarters while on the road was Elmer Jones' two car Cooper Bros. Now Hagenbeck-Wallace, under lease to new owners, was out again while Cooper Bros. cars were idle and the owner serving as the Jack Hoxie general superintendent. Of the rail shows Cole Bros.-Clyde Beatty presented a daily street parade.

The list of motorized shows included Tom Mix, Downie Bros., Russell Bros., Wallace Bros., Lewis Bros., Dan Rice,

The Hoxie midway in Somerset, Pennsylvania. Note ticket wagon at right listing prices of 25 and 40 cents.





Seils-Sterling, Walter L. Main, Jack Hoxie, Mighty Haag, Kay Bros., Barney Bros., Howe Bros., Yankee-Patterson, Seal Bros., Atterbury Bros., Chase & Son, Haag Bros., Roberts Bros., Eddy Bros., Silver Bros., Royal Bros., Famous Robbins, Patterson Bros., Conroy Bros., Hall's Animal, Norris Bros., Schell Bros., Wiziard, Tiger Bill's Wild West, Miller Bros., World Bros., and Bible Bros. Seal Bros. and Haag Bros. presented street parades.

Even with this huge number of circuses, each seeking their share of the natives' quarters, business during the early part of the season was good for most shows. A second round of devastating floods in the midwest in early spring had not caused too many problems, although circus agents avoided the worst of these areas when routing their shows during the first few weeks. Business conditions in the latter part of 1937 dropped off and this coupled with numerous strikes, lockouts, and general labor unrest which marked the start of Roosevelt's second term, lowered the take for most shows on the road.

Sometime, not long into the season, well known veteran general agent R. M. Harvey joined the show and took over the routing duties. He was one of the best in the business. A report in the *Billboard* dated June 19 at Massillon, Ohio said that Harvey of the Jack Hoxie Circus had been there for several days arranging a route in that section. It was reported that the show, within a few days, would wind up its Western Pennsylvania tour, pick up Wheeling, West Virginia then cross the Ohio River, with Cambridge as the first of several stands in the Buckeye State. Massillon was scheduled for July 1.

From there the show would swing back into the central part of the state, after which the route was indefinite, contracting being held up temporarily because of the Republic Steel strike. If this was cleared up, the show would play many of the affected steel strike towns, according to Harvey.

The article concluded by stating that on the advance with Harvey was Harry Winslow, contracting press and assisting him with routing details.

In addition to playing Hagerstown as mentioned in the advertisement previously noted the show may have played other stands in Maryland. On May 17 it was in Pennsylvania at Somerset, followed by Connelville, Indiana, Brookville, Ridgeway, Emporium on the 22nd. On May 23-24 the show played Olean, New York. Other known dates in the Keystone State were at Couder-

sport, 25; Wellsboro, 26; Jersey Shore, 27; Bellefonte, 28; Union, 29 and Lewistown, 30-31.

When June arrived the show was still in Pennsylvania and played Lebanon on the 9th, followed by Chambersburg the next day. On June 15 the show was back in Maryland at Cumberland and Frostburg on the 16th. The route



This Riverside lithograph was originally designed for the Miller Bros. 101 Ranch Wild West. It was cross lined with the Hoxie title in 1937.

seemed to carry the show back and forth between Maryland, West Virginia and Pennsylvania. It was in Fairmont, West Virginia June 20-21 and Morgantown on the 22nd. On June 23 it played Waynesburg, Pennsylvania, followed by Charleroi, 24 and Cannonsburg, 25th.

In the meantime, although the show was drawing reportably good business at many stands, things were not well with the organization. Roger Boyd says the management had trouble with the leased trucks and drivers almost from day one. Dub Duggan recalls hearing his father tell about a fight in the cookhouse between some of Jack Hoxie's cowboys and Owen Conrad's truck drivers with the latter getting the better of it. Another time saw Hoxie's wife, Dixie, getting very upset when truck drivers said they were going to haul the show to a town different from the one scheduled. Of course they did not, but the general bickering and conflicts be-

tween the drivers and the rest of the show's personnel created real problems.

However, the worst of the show's problems was money, of which there was not enough to make the regular payroll, pay Jack Hoxie his cut, and the heavy payments due on the canvas and to the trucking firm.

Finally, a missed payroll brought matters to a head when the show was at Moundsville, West Virginia on June 26. There the show folded after less than two and a half months on the road. The sudden closing resulted in a major article in the July 10, 1937 *Billboard* with huge full page headlines, "HOXIE STRAWS 'EM YET FOLDS. Closing at Moundsville, W. Va. Mystery to All But Management. Big Show band strikes closing night, and Side Show band plays performance-Jack Hoxie and R. M. Harvey plan reorganizing and operating show-same title."

The article went on to say that the Jack Hoxie Circus had closed, temporarily it was hoped, giving its last performance Saturday night, June 26, at Moundsville, West Virginia to a straw house, a circus record for that little city. It was billed for the next stand in Wheeling, West Virginia June 27-28 and even after it was announced in local papers that the show had closed thousands of people went to the grounds to attend the performance. The manager of the street car lines had arranged to put on 14 extra cars and as many crews to handle the thousands who he said wanted to attend the circus. No doubt Wheeling would have given the Hoxie show extra performances for the scheduled two day stand. Cambridge, Ohio had been billed for June 29, Coshocton the 30th, Massillon, July 1; Wooster, 2 and Millersburg 3.

The article noted that the reason the show was closing was a mystery to all with it except the management. Very few accidents had occurred and there was only one severe storm which hit the show at Martinsburg [date not given] and tore the side show top to ribbons. Business had been uniformly good, including many straw houses. The show had been well billed and daily hundreds of women and children hunted Jack Hoxie to obtain his autograph.

Continuing, the *Billboard* report said there had been an air of secrecy and mystery around the show for some time. Jack Hoxie and Dixie Starr were not financially interested in the circus but were supposed to receive a handsome salary weekly as well as half of the concert receipts. Cly Newton was owner and organizer and had a large number of



relatives as assistants. Jack Hoxie also had several relatives of his wife in key positions.

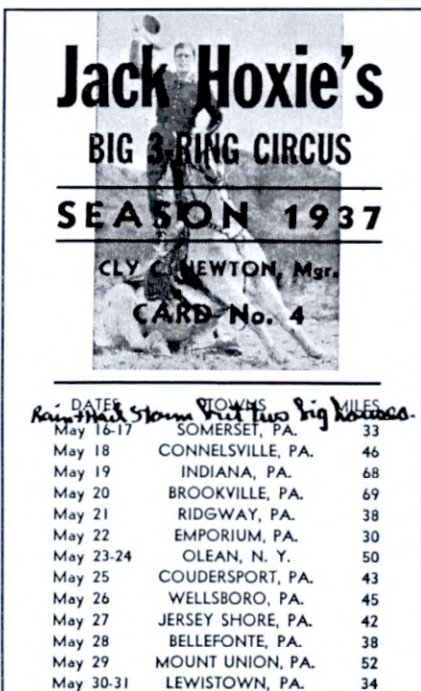
Notwithstanding good business and the honest opinion of every employee of the show that it had already cleared several thousand dollars, apparently no effort was made to prevent the closing. Newton had mysteriously left the show for almost a week, payday came and treasurer Smith received a wire to "hold all money." Previous to that, salaries, with the exception of the advance, Jack Hoxie and some of the bosses, had been promptly paid. Members of the troupe told the *Billboard* reporter they could not see any reason why pay day should be skipped at this time. There had been a straw house both the night of the closing and the night before. The big show band struck the final night and the side show band played the performance as best it could. Attachments were obtained by the band that night. Newton announced that they would be cleared away and instructed performers and others with private property to move on to the lot in Wheeling, which was done. He said he would have the circus equipment there early Monday morning. The claim of the band was for less than \$150. Monday morning came and the circus equipment was still on the lot in Moundsville and upon investigation it seemed if no serious effort had been made to release the attachments of the small amount claimed. Performers had been told they would be paid Sunday, but they were not, nor were the bosses or the advance.

The Wheeling circus lot had been crowded all day Sunday with curious folk waiting for arrival of the show. When pressed for an explanation the management tried to convince the people that the show was broke and failed. The troupers knew what the business had been. It was claimed heavy payments had to be made on installment and conditional purchases, but information proved that many of these payments had gone by default. Immediately, the three justice courts in Moundsville were crowded with employees demanding attachments for their last week and holdback pay and the unpaid bosses and the advance people did the same. If shortage of finances was the cause of the small band attachment not being lifted Newton was offered a loan of sufficient money by people with the show but would not take it.

The lengthy account noted that ten days prior to this trouble Newton had approached Hoxie and said he wanted to get rid of the show because it was a bigger job than he could handle and

suggested that Hoxie and R. M. Harvey take over the show. Terms were agreed upon verbally and Harvey was sent for. Before he arrived Newton disappeared for several days. Since this legal entanglement he again disappeared and the courts and officers had been unable to locate him.

Both Hoxie and Harvey had wires



| DATE      | TOWNS              | MILES |
|-----------|--------------------|-------|
| May 16-17 | SOMERSET, PA.      | 33    |
| May 18    | CONNELLSVILLE, PA. | 46    |
| May 19    | INDIANA, PA.       | 68    |
| May 20    | BROOKVILLE, PA.    | 69    |
| May 21    | RIDGWAY, PA.       | 38    |
| May 22    | EMPORIUM, PA.      | 30    |
| May 23-24 | OLEAN, N. Y.       | 50    |
| May 25    | COUDERSPORT, PA.   | 43    |
| May 26    | WELLSBORO, PA.     | 45    |
| May 27    | JERSEY SHORE, PA.  | 42    |
| May 28    | BELLEFONTE, PA.    | 38    |
| May 29    | MOUNT UNION, PA.   | 52    |
| May 30-31 | LEWISTOWN, PA.     | 34    |

Route card used by the Hoxie show early in the 1937 season.

of various propositions but they planned to reorganize and operate a Jack Hoxie Circus. Practically all of the bosses and performers said they would wait for them to open, for they knew the value of the Hoxie name.

No explanation was ever given for Cly Newton's disappearance on two occasions. Probably he left to seek new money. In the meantime while matters were still muddled and the show stranded in Moundsville and Wheeling, Jack Hoxie personally sought new funds by getting himself and several of his troupe booked three days at the Capital Theater in Wheeling as part of the vaudeville bill. The numbers were advertised as feature acts from the Hoxie circus with the top attraction being Jack Hoxie himself and his horse Scout. The vaudeville shows were given tremendous ovations by large crowds of enthusiastic children as well as older folk.

On July 2 fifteen attachment suits filled at Moundsville against Cly Newton and Jack Hoxie were dismissed as pertaining to Hoxie, but let stand against Newton who still had not ap-

peared to answer them. Several of the suits were scheduled for trial within the next week, according to published reports.

How the matter of the suits was finally resolved is not known to the author. However, Newton did get out of it some how and was able to return to the road with a new show by August 30, which will be mentioned in this narrative later. As for Hoxie and Harvey, they did indeed begin to reorganize the show and hit the road a few weeks later with a new Jack Hoxie Circus. Several of the show's former employees remained to go with the new show but other left. Some joined the Dan Rice Circus as well as other shows. The Nelson elephants also departed.

Dub Duggan says he first learned that the Hoxie show had folded in Moundsville when Owen Conrad called his father and gave him the news and also sought his advice on what he should do about the semis and drivers he had leased to the show. Some of the trucks, possibly all, remained to go with the reorganized show but what they did during the month the show was off the road is not definitely known. Maybe they were temporarily diverted to other hauls. But in any event, information in the trade publications as well as photos taken later of the new show indicate the semis were still there.

The July 17, 1937 *Billboard* informed the show world the latest on the Hoxie situation. The story was headed "Second Summons Issued for Newton" and was dated July 10. The article said that nine more cases of attachments against Jack Hoxie and Cly Newton were dismissed in Justice Harvey's court in Moundsville, as to Hoxie, and a second summons issued for Newton, who had up to that time succeeded in avoiding the officers with official documents ordering him into court. The Reeds who owned the Nelson elephant act were among the later ones to file an attachment.

Hoxie and R. M. Harvey it was mentioned were progressing rapidly with their plans for a new show. They would use very little of the old property, but would have a new outfit, including grandstand chairs. Hoxie would be the producer and director of arena; Dixie Starr, treasurer; R. M. Harvey, manager; Elmer Jones would act as lot superintendent and George Myers as equestrian director. Harry Doran would be in charge of the candy stands.

The article said that none of the Newtons would be identified with the new Hoxie show and concluded by noting that most of the bosses and performers were in camp with Hoxie near Wheel-



ing. An innovation was promised in the way of music to accompany the performance. Hoxie and Dixie Starr with their unit of circus performers from the former show had contracts for two weeks of dates to fill while Harvey and others framed the new edition of the show. They planned to have a larger unit on tour the next winter.

As soon as legal matters were cleared up the equipment was moved to a site just outside of Salem, Ohio, where the show would resume its tour. A large two column half page ad in the July 24, 1937 *Billboard* let the circus world know that the reorganized Jack Hoxie circus would take to the road again on July 31. The ad read as follows:

**"JACK HOXIE CIRCUS.** Wants reliable people in all branches of the business for long season. Performers with acts of exceptional merit and best of wardrobe--Acts worthy of featuring. Troupes preferred. No act is too good for this show. Wild west people with flashy wardrobe, capable of doing thrilling stunts. People with stock preferred. Red Lunsford wire. Animal acts. Elephants, ponies, dogs, goats. Same must be perfectly trained and have transportation. Huntleys and Pat Christman, write or wire. Side show or pit shows--Novelties, oddities, unoffensive features and curious people, musical teams, dancers. Manager able to make strong openings, ticket sellers. Musicians. Sober and dependable, for 16 piece band. Electricians. Workingmen and bosses in all departments. Jack Allen and Jack Allman write or wire. Mechanics. Cook house help and truck drivers. Advance. Can use aggressive publicity men, all around billers and agents and two billers with own cars. This circus is a heavy three ring motorized show; provides gas and oil for people with own transportation and guarantees best of cook house. The staff. Jack Hoxie, General Director; R. M. Harvey, manager; George L. Myers, Equestrian Director; Elmer Jones, Superintendent; Harry V. Winslow, General Agent; Harry Doran, Superintendent of Concessions. Show will resume Saturday, July 31st. Note--Time is short--state all in first letter or wire and prepay wires. All Address Jack Hoxie Circus, Salem, Ohio.

**"TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:** This is to certify that I was not in any way responsible, financially or otherwise,

for the conduct of the Jack Hoxie Circus as operated under the Newton management. This enlarged, improved Jack Hoxie Circus will provide the best food and accommodations for employees, will treat patrons with respect and pay all salaries and bills promptly. Jack Hoxie."

A week later the *Billboard* carried a story headlined, "Reorganized Jack



Hoxie side show manager Leon Bennett, in hat, with the dancing girls and Scotch band making an opening early in the 1937 season.

Hoxie show to resume tour at Salem, Ohio." That report said that with its executive personnel practically complete and organization almost perfected, the Jack Hoxie Circus, new in its entirety, would resume its tour at Salem, Ohio the afternoon of July 31. This statement was official, it being provided a *Billoard* reporter by R. M. Harvey and Jack Hoxie. The first ten days would take the show through northeastern and eastern Ohio and then into Indiana. Harry V. Winslow, agent, already had contracted stands two weeks in advance and the advance, temporarily in charge of Joe Katz, with three trucks, left Salem July 23 after billing the opening stand several days earlier. The advance crew was to be augmented within a few days and at least two more trucks added to the fleet.

The story noted the Hoxie camp, on the outskirts of Salem, was bristling with activity. The show was being rebuilt from the marquee to the backyard. Work on the new grandstand, to have a capacity of several hundred chairs, an innovation with the show, would be completed within the next few days. The big top, a 90 with three 40s would go up on Wednesday before the Satur-

day opening, as would other new canvas, which had already been shipped. Many acts had already arrived and were rehearsing.

Continuing, the article said Dixie Starr had been buying equipment for the cookhouse and other departments. Mr. Harvey had been dividing his time between the show and looking over prospective acts that were negotiating with the show. The program, Mr. Hoxie said, would be presented in three rings and would be high-class throughout. The show would have a side show and would likely carry a pit show. As previously, the show would feature a wild west after-concert, headlining Jack Hoxie.

In discussing plans for his new show Hoxie said he was endeavoring to assemble the best small circus on the road. He declared that the equipment would be the best money could buy, the cookhouse would provide only the best of food and that he intended to make the show the nucleus of a bigger and better Hoxie circus in future years.

A final note said that Jack Hoxie, Jr. celebrated his second birthday at the show's quarters. A new set of chaps and a new saddle, an exact replica of that used by his dad, were among many gifts he received.

It can easily be seen that Hoxie and Harvey were providing as much hype as they could for the new show, and this business of "all new of everything" has to be recognized for what it is. However, one improvement was indeed made, and that was the long side seating, formerly starbacks, was remodeled so that several hundred grandstand chairs could be used. Also it appears the show did have new cookhouse equipment, the former may still been tied up in legal matters or retained personally by Cly Newton. A later report, probably correct, said that a new padroom top had been delivered, and of course the side show top which was destroyed in a storm earlier had already been replaced. Most of the work done in the few weeks the show was in Salem was in assembling new acts and putting together a program as well as replacing the several staffers and workingmen who had left.

A new bandleader and band had to be obtained and a short notice in the trade publication said that Jack Hoxie while in Wheeling hired Dick Betts, ace organist at the Capital Theater, and the Flying X Roundup Boys and brought



them with him when he left for Salem. Betts became the new big show band leader and probably played a portable electric organ.

Quite a few new side show personnel had to be obtained to replace those who had departed. One leaving was Jack Walsh, who the *Billboard* said had formerly been with the Dan Rice and lately with the Jack Hoxie show. He joined the Chase and Son Circus where he managed the pit show featuring Jean-Jeanette.

Since the Louis Reed-Adele Nelson elephants had left a new bull act had to be hired. Hoxie leased the elephant Mena, along with a truck to transport her, from E. E. Coleman. One report had Mena on hand for the opening performance in Salem while another had her first appearance coming several days later at Massillon, Ohio on August 6. Mena was a well known elephant having spent many seasons on the road with the M. L. Clark Circus and came to Coleman when he bought the Clark show in 1930. When not being featured on shows personally operated by Coleman the elephant was leased to other circuses. Mena was with Duggan Bros. in 1934 and during the 1936 season was with the Joe B. Webb Circus. At times Coleman also provided a man to work her while out on lease but not this time. While with the Jack Hoxie show she was worked by Roger Boyd, who took over that chore in addition to his other duties as superintendent of properties. The semi which Coleman provided for the animal's transportation was colorfully painted and decorated. Mena's name was painted in large letters on the side of the vehicle. She was well known in the circus world.

The "new" Jack Hoxie Circus opened as advertised, at Salem, Ohio, July 31, 1937. Again, the *Billboard* had a marvelous review which was printed in the August 14 issue. Its completeness compels us to reprint it in its entirety. The story read as follows:

**"REORGANIZED HOXIE SHOW ON 20 SEMI-TRAILERS: PLEASING PROGRAM."**

"Salem, Ohio, August 7-Reveling in newness and possessing the nucleus of a successful venture, the reorganized Jack Hoxie Circus had its premiere here July 31, as briefly mentioned in last week's story.

"Show is moving on 20 semi-trailers and a half hundred trucks and private cars. Three trucks are in advance, with two others to be added later.

"The program, hurriedly assembled here, moved somewhat sluggishly at the afternoon performance, but at night it was run off more smoothly. Equestri-

an Director George Myers is to be congratulated in having banded together a pleasing and talented program on such short notice. No menagerie is carried.

"Program is presented in three rings, with Myers doing a good job of announcing. Top is a 90 with three 40s. Canvas is comparatively new. Padroom, a 60 with two 30s, is new, as is the 60 x 90 cookhouse top. Kid show top, a 60 with two 30s, has been used only a few weeks. Personnel of the show will

This newspaper ad was used by the reopened Hoxie show. It was rehashed from a Russell Bros. Circus ad.

soon exceed 150, R. M. Harvey said. Wardrobe is a real flash, everything being new and clean.

"Big top presents a pleasing appearance with all poles, seats and props new or painted. The new grandstand, on the right side, built here in its entirety, is seven rows high, with 600 new non-tiltable chairs. Star backs fill the center section opposite the grandstand, with blues flanking both ends for a capacity of approximately 4,000.

"All trucks and trailers have been reconditioned and repainted. Show has a fine light plant, with a smaller auxiliary plant for emergency. Cookhouse is entirely new as is all equipment, which was purchased under the direction of Mrs. Hoxie. E. Clark Bobbett, director of display advertising, had a string of banners at opening stand the entire

length of big top, besides an automobile display.

"After ten days in Ohio show moves into Indiana and then into the corn and tobacco country for fall, according to Mr. Harvey, who is laying out the show's route.

#### "The Program

"Tournament, all performers and stock participating, led by 2 year old Jack Hoxie, Jr. on his white pony mount. Introduction of Jack Hoxie; Radtke's dogs, an excellent routine; swinging ladders, Marion Clark, Pauline Eaton; Spanish web, Josephine Barth; clowns; Pauline Eaton, Roman rings; the Barths, high perch; Jaime Walters, Roman rings; Huffy Hoffman's Funny Ford; concert announcement; Harry and Mitzi, double traps; Radtke's cloud swing clowns; Holland-Dockrill Troupe, principal riding act, four people and four head of stock; clowns; Marion Clark, teeth slide length of top; Harry Eaton on slack wire; the Eddys, whip crackers; the Barths, tetterboard; concert announcement; clowns; Kathryn Eaton, single traps, closing with muscle grind, special announcement for her finish; Valeska Radtke, single traps, closing with leg catch, also special announcement; clowns baseball bit on track; elephant Mena; banner announcements; Jaime Walters, Eaton Sisters and Marion Clark, iron jaw; Eatons for a close present their cradle, trapeze and iron-jaw novelty, one of the women holding all three by her teeth for a swell finish; finale, Indian spec.

"In concert Jack Hoxie and Dixie Starr present a scene from one of their western films with special scenery and effects; Red and Rene Lunsford, fancy riders, ropers and steer riders; Three Eddys, fancy ropers and whip crackers; 'Slim' Cox cowboy radio entertainers, two women and three men; Montana Earl, trick roper, horse catcher; Chico Indians (three); Shorty Hinkle, bow and arrow marksman; Joe Clark, whip cracker.

"In clown alley are Harold J. Conn, Tom Hibbert, Al Sherwin, Joe Franklin, Huffy Hoffman, Jim Lunsford with trick mule, Shorty Hinkle, and Thomas Thornton.

"Property men are in new jump suits with Jack Hoxie Circus in white letters on back, Roger Boyd, superintendent; Jim Lunsford, Jimmy Richard, Glen Libert, Leo Willsey, Cecil Byrd, Bing Hilderbrand and Al Whitaker. Steve Burke is a sign painter and lettered all trucks and props. Mrs. Dick Betts and Irma Gray are dancers in spec.

"Band personnel omitted because it was not complete at opening stand.



# "The Staff

"Jack Hoxie, producer; R. M. Harvey, manager; Dixie Starr, treasurer; Ivan Starr, secretary; H. W. Doran, auditor; George L. Myers, equestrian director; Dick Betts, musical director; B. S. Urquart, bandmaster; F. R. Anders, legal adjuster; Eddie Delavan, superintendent of tickets, in charge of front door; Mrs. Selavan, down down ticket sale; Al Martin, tax box; Elmer Jones, superintendent; Charles Ryan, boss canvasman; Roger Boyd, boss props; George Wheeler, chief usher; M. A. Riley, side show canvas; T. A. Pence, side show manager; Owen Conrad, master of transportation; Floyd Harvey, chief electrician; Leonard Brumbo, master mechanic; Mrs. Earle Brumbo, wardrobe; Lee Ward, steward; Orville Davis, 24 hour man; Julius Katz in charge advance fleet; George Marquis, story man; Barney Kern, special advance agent; Harry Doran, superintendent concessions; E. Clark Bobbett, director of display advertising.

# "Side Show

"Tommy Pence, manager and Dave LaMont, assistant; Barney F. Cannady and Harry (Chuck) Underwood, outside tickets; H. Porter, ticket taker. The lineup: Guy Sampson, musical cowboy, novelty musical act; Chanda, magician; Princess Zeela, mentalist; Jack Hoxie's Dixie Minstrels--Willie Smith, comic; George Tallie, comedian; Grace Williams, blues singer; Myrtle Tallie, singer and dancer, and Viola Tallie, singing and dancing; Emma Von Lynd, three legged girl. Annex-Vannie Cannady, Maudie Kennedy and Marloe Scotch Highlanders, including Walter and Virginia Marloe and James Campbell.

"Among those who attended show at Salem were K. C. DeLong, Jack Nedrow, J. J. Evans and wife, Glen Z. Wagner, John Hare, Ray Wallace, Roy Wild and Rex McConnell and wife, J. A. Scheurman and wife."

The opening review made no mention of how well the show drew at the ticket wagon but there was a short notice which said that at the second stand, Youngstown, Ohio, August 2, the Hoxie show was compelled to give an extra evening show, making three for the day, all sellouts. Midway was jammed from early afternoon until after the last show started at night. The side show and concessions all experienced a big

day. The tie-up with *The Vindicator* resulted in sale of more than 4,000 sponsored tickets, half of the profit going to a fund for a fresh air camp for Youngstown children. *The Vindicator* was lavish in its praise for the show's performance and its executive personnel.

And thus the Jack Hoxie Circus was again on the road. The exact financial arrangement between the two owners,



This stock Riverside Printing Company litho was used by the Hoxie show in 1937.

Hoxie and Harvey, is not known. It is strongly suspected that Hoxie put up most of the funds and these were probably limited. It appears that arrangements were made to continue the time payments on the big top and other properties as well as making lease payments to Owen Conrad for use of his trucks and drivers. Also reports coming at the time of the shows final closing indicate the new canvas came from Baker-Lockwood Company and again on time payments.

After Youngstown the show moved to Warren, Ohio for performances the next day. The next four days of the show's route was provided by an advertisement placed in the *Billboard* in which "Energetic Sober Union Billers" were wanted by the Jack Hoxie Circus. Those interested were asked to address R. M. Harvey, Jack Hoxie Circus at Painesville, August 4; Elyria, 5th; Massillon, 6th; Millersburg, 7th, all Ohio stands.

The next two dates have not been determined but on August 10 the show played Lima, Ohio. The following editorial, written by publisher Col. Roy Galvin, appeared in *The Lima News* of August 10, the day the Hoxie show was there. It read: "A circus is in town today. Not the world's largest, but never-

theless it is a circus with all the thrills which raised us to the peaks of ecstasy years ago when we carried water for the elephants or performed other circus chores so we could perch on the top seats and stare with open mouths at the clowns, the elephants and the daring trapeze performers.

"When we look back over our childhood days and review our greatest enjoyments we can class the circus as the greatest because it is the heritage of the centuries and has remained through the years the cleanest show on earth. Vaudeville has passed with movies and radio taking its place. But the circus remains with us as in the days of our youth. The Side Show ballyhoo, the raucous barkers, the gaudily painted ticket wagons, the wide expanse of white canvas--the big top--are all the same as 25 years ago.

"It may be the greatest show on earth or it may be a small circus, but somehow the 'youngster instinct' which stays with us despite the years always seems to creep out on circus day and makes us feel like kids again.

"The circus is a part of American life. It has maintained the traditions of unsullied amusement, may it remain that way." (Author's note. How well these sentiments written over fifty years ago fit the mind and mood of present day circus fans.)

Lima was the final date in Ohio and the show then moved into Indiana at Hartford City on August 11 and was followed by Frankfort,, Lebanon and Attica. Then three days are missing and next we find the circus at Robinson, Illinois on the 17th, back into Indiana at Vincennes, 18th and again in Illinois at Olney on the 19th. Then come more stands in that state at Flora, Vandalia, Roodhouse and Pittsfield.

Pittsfield, played August 24, was the final stand in Illinois and the next day the show moved into Missouri at Mexico, followed by Boonville, Marshall and two days in Independence, August 28-29. The Hoxie show was in Clinton, Missouri the 30th; Nevada, 31; Neosho, September 1; Monett, 2; Rogers, Arkansas, 3; and Fayetteville, 4.

It may be noted that the show's route was carrying it into large metropolitan areas, such as Independence near Kansas City and also into rather small spots such as Vandalia and Roodhouse. One



of the greatest route artists in circus history, R. M. Harvey, was guiding the Jack Hoxie advance even though most of the time he was back on the lot directing the daily activities there. Some weeks into the season Harvey sent the veteran Elmer Jones out to head the Hoxie brigade. Although reports from the show enroute appearing in the trade publications were extremely limited it appears that sufficient money was found coming into the ticket wagon to keep it going, but still the heavy time payments were a drag on the show.

Later information would indicate the



take was okay during the route through Ohio, Indiana and Illinois, but once into Missouri it dropped sharply. We have three more Missouri stands thanks to the Marcks notes, Neosha, Monnett and Nevada, but not the days they were played. The next definite date finds the show down in Arkansas at Fort Smith on September 6.

In the meantime we pick up the activities of Cly Newton after the affairs of Moundville. The 1937 season had not gone well for any of the Newton family. William (Lucky Bill) Newton, Sr. died at Willimatic, Connecticut on June 19. Before entering his final illness he had been on the road with his son's Walter L. Main Circus. The senior Newton's obit said he had operated shows from 1880 to 1920. At Norway, Maine the Walter L. Main show suffered a blowdown of the big top and other tentage when high winds hit in the afternoon of July 17. A second twister came about 7:30 p. m. but the big top did not go down and finally a performance started at 9:30. Then in the early fall the partnership agreement between Honest Bill Newton and Walter L. Main fell apart and Main pulled out. He said that his title could continue to be used for the remainder of the 1937 season. In 1938 Honest Bill would go out with the Newton Bros title.

As mentioned earlier the author does not know how Cly Newton got out of the difficulties resulting in the Hoxie

close at Moundville. But he did so to the extent he was able to return to the road with another show, using the title of Moon Bros. on August 30. This was a title the Newtons had used back in the 1920s. Although few details are available on Cly's 1937 version of Moon Bros. it was framed on a much smaller scale than the Jack Hoxie Circus.

There was an advertisement in the August 21, 1937 *Billboard* which read, "MOON BROS. CIRCUS. Opening August 30. Wants acts for big show, aerial acts, chimp act to feature, clowns, elephant act (Nelsons wire).

The Jack Hoxie Big 3 Ring Circus on the lot early in the 1937 tour.

"Equestrian director capable of working dogs and ponies. Can place side show people. Leon Bennett answer. Frank Anders wire. Can use pit show complete. Contracting agent and billers, man who understands merchant ticket tieups. Mike Pyne, Warren Warren wire. Wingy Saunders, Shorty Butcher, wire. White musicians and callopie player. Frank Meister, answer. Moon Bros. Circus, P. O. Box 122, Mobile, Alabama."

Shortly after the advertisement appeared Russell G. Knisely wrote the *Billboard* that he had resigned from the advance of the Walter L. Main Circus to assume the duties of general agent of Moon Bros. Circus. No mention of the Moon show opening appeared in the trade publication but it can be assumed it did so as scheduled at some spot near the Mobile, Alabama quarters where it was organized. The route was probably in the deep south in the states of Alabama and Mississippi. The *Billboard* said the show played Ripley, Mississippi on September 29.

As noted before, news items of the Jack Hoxie show were rare in the *Billboard*. However, there were a couple of interesting items, the kind that make circus research so fascinating. Both concerned the departure from the show

of the elephant, Mena, while playing Independence, Missouri August 28-29. The first story said that Mena, female elephant, owned by E. E. Coleman, was no longer with the Jacks Hoxie Circus. She was dropped by the show at Independence, Missouri, because it "could not afford to keep her any longer," according to Coleman, who said he received a wire to that effect. He further said that Jerry Cooper, a truck driver, was left in charge and that he sent a man from Dayton to bring Mena home. The article said the elephant was with Hoxie since August 6, when the show played Massillon, Ohio, which conflicts with the review of the opening stand at Salem, Ohio a week earlier in which Mena was listed in the performance.

A sort time later, George Marquis, press agent with Hoxie wrote the *Billboard* that the reason given for Mena leaving the show in the earlier story was not correct. Marquis said, "the reason the Hoxie Circus could not afford to carry Mena was because the truck she came in was too worn out to transport the heavy elephant. Mena was okay, but the truck was no good." And there you have it historians. The other report also sent in by George Marquis read as follows: "Old Scout, Hoxie's veteran movie horse, seems to have acquired good 'business sense' along with 'horse sense' during his twenty years.

"On nights when the grandstand is not filled Scout only trots around the hippodrome track, but on nights when the grandstand is filled he 'bucks' high before the chairs. Scout has been bucking high these nights down in Dixie."

Well, the fact was that Marquis' little story, although cute, wasn't telling the truth about business in Dixie because the take was now seriously off. Following the date at Fort Smith the route becomes "lost" for almost two weeks. It is assumed more stands were played in Arkansas before the show moved into Mississippi where the heat of summer persisted and its appearance in the cotton country was a little too soon. In reality the Jack Hoxie Circus had been limping along for several weeks, ever since leaving Illinois, and the end was not far off.

The show played Grenada, Mississippi, Saturday, September 18, and that evening Jack Hoxie personally made his last appearance and according to press reports shortly thereafter left the outfit taking with him his complete cowboy troupe. On the Sunday off, 19th, the show moved to Clarksdale where performances were given on Monday, 20th, but without Hoxie or any of of his group. Manager R. M.



Harvey made an effort to salvage the show but was not successful. The show left Clarksdale and moved on to Rosedale, Mississippi where the last performance of the Jack Hoxie Circus was given on September 21, 1937. It was scheduled to move on to Cleveland the following day but it never made it. The Jack Hoxie Circus was finished.

The October 2, 1937 *Billboard* told of the blowup with an article headlined, "HOXIE AND SEVERAL ACTS LEAVE HOXIE CIRCUS: SHOW HALTS LATER."

"The Hoxie Circus not closed but following contracted route successfully," so read a telegram from Manager R. M. Harvey from Clarksdale, Mississippi, September 20. Later came a letter dated September 20 from George Marquis, who closed with the Hoxie circus at Clarksdale, in explanation of the matter. Said Marquis: There should be little doubt that Coleman was correct. Since business had fallen off after the show went into Missouri the nut [expense] had to be lowered and this was one way to do it. From all indications the show then went without an elephant for the remainder of the season."

Another *Billboard* note said that when the Jack Hoxie show was at Nevada, Missouri several showfolks visited the home of Mrs. Lulu Banker, mother of the late Gladys Le Tourneau, aerialist. Miss La Tourneau died from injuries received while on the Siebrand show. The Hoxie folk held brief memorial services at the grave and placed flowers.

An interesting article appearing in the September 18, 1937 *Billboard* said that Labor Day turned out big for two circuses in the south, Wallace Bros. at Columbus, Georgia and Jack Hoxie at Fort Smith, Arkansas. At Fort Smith the city celebrated Labor Day with a mile long parade in the morning and by filling to overflowing the Jack Hoxie big top at both afternoon and evening performances. The circus band led the local marchers in the morning procession and several Hoxie floats were in it.

The piece said that W. G. Shipley, owner of the Holsum Baking Company and a live-wire advertiser, gave the show his commercial periods on KFPW. The big show band and Slim Cox and his Broken Arrow Cowboy Band made broadcasts. The Holsum people plugged the coming of the circus on all their broadcasts a week prior to Labor Day.

At almost every stand played by the show local firms had large newspaper advertising space about the coming of the show. Newspapers were extremely liberal and cooperated with special supplements, and in several cases "circus

extras" were published. Merchants tickets were discounted and the circus prices were raised.

The article concluded by noting that Barney Kern was in charge of the advance; Elmer Jones was brigade manager; Julius Katz was 24-hour man and George Marquis was press agent ahead of the show. All routing was done by R. M. Harvey.

Two other Hoxie items appeared in the same *Billboard*. One came from Thurman Knight who advised that the



This Jack Hoxie Circus poster was printed by Central Show Print in red and blue.

brigade of the Hoxie show, led by Elmer Jones, was sailing along smoothly. With him were Crabtree, Eugene Boling and Shorty Rhodes, billposters; Harry Cohn, banners; Jimmy DeVois Davis, and Thurman Knight, lithographers.

"The Jack Hoxie Circus, minus its star and without many of its feature acts, gave a creditable performance last night at the Clarksdale ball park.

"Hoxie appeared in Grenada, Mississippi, Saturday (September 18) with his complete troupe. Sunday the cowboy did a 'Houdini' right under the eyes of R. M. Harvey, veteran circus manager. Believing that the disappearance of the show's standard bearer would mean the disbanding of the circus, many of the leading acts followed suit.

"Harvey, who has had many years experience with America's largest circuses,

followed the big top tradition, 'the show must go on.' Many of the real troupers pledged their allegiance to the new show and came into Clarksdale, where folks enjoyed the show realizing the tremendous handicap and appreciating the splendid spirit of the showman.

"The reorganized circus is scheduled to appear tomorrow in Rosedale and in Cleveland Wednesday. The advertised name of the circus cannot be changed immediately because the posters have been placed two weeks in advance. Harvey optimistically believes that as long as explanation is made that Jack Hoxie is not with the show in person it will not matter.

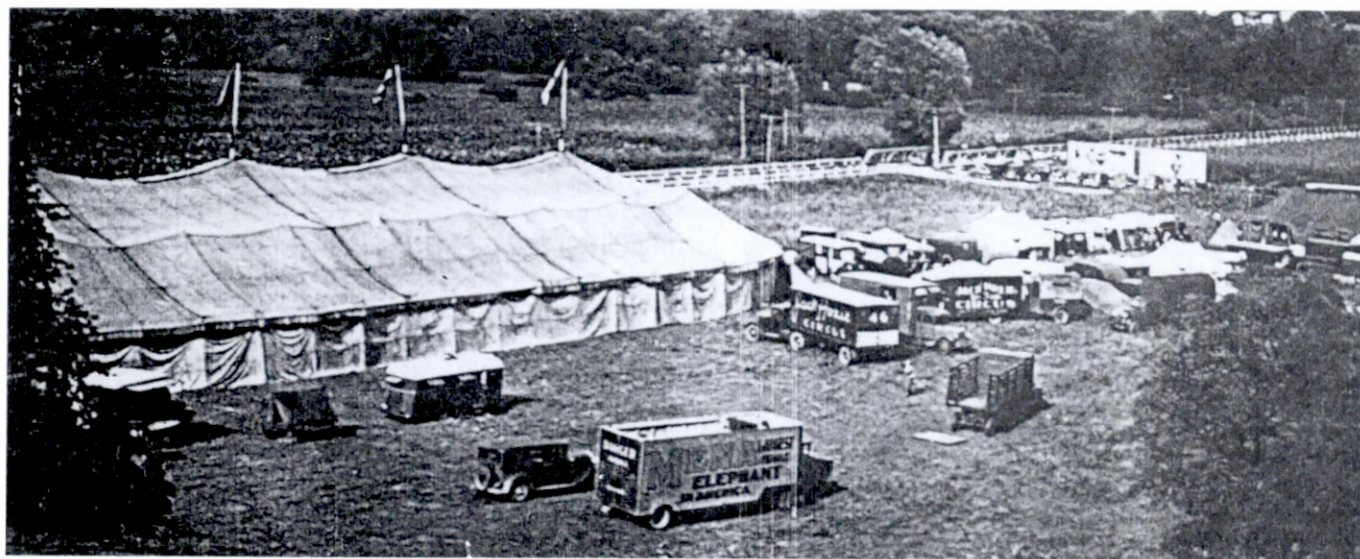
"The writer, personal press agent for Jack Hoxie, had a heavy tie up with the Clarksdale *Daily Register*, published by William Snider, lieutenant governor of Mississippi and fortunately a circus fan. The failure of my star to show up was embarrassing to me, but Governor Snider (who at the time was acting governor of the state) declared that all newspaper relations with the press department were pleasant."

The article continued by stating that the status of the Hoxie circus had changed since the above telegram and letter were written, according to Julius Katz who arrived at his home in Cincinnati suffering from a severe cold. Katz, who was doing press on the show, said he was with the show when it halted at Rosedale, Tuesday night, September 21, only an evening performance was given there because of a late arrival and the gross from the big show performance, concert, side show and everything amounted to \$69.50, he declared. Performers and staff scattered in various directions and canvas, costumes and other equipment were loaded in a freight car and shipped to Baker-Lockwood in Kansas City, Missouri. Winston's Broadway Rastus Company, black minstrel show, appeared in Rosedale the same day as the Hoxie circus, Katz added.

To follow up on the demise of the Jack Hoxie show the *Billboard* then contacted the Baker-Lockwood Co. which replied, "because of continuous bad business the show got to where it was impossible for it to move, so they turned over to us our property which was being used by the show."

About a week later Harry Metz, who had taken over the side show at some point after the show's reopening in Salem, told the *Billboard* he was with the Jack Hoxie Circus until the finish at Rosedale, Mississippi, September 21. Metz was quoted: "It was a pathetic sight to see all those performers, work-





ingmen, ticket sellers and takers and others, most of them without a dollar--women and children and even men crying--loyal troupers every one, and I'll venture to say that no greater loyalty could be found in any other profession.

"There seemed to be a lack of money in Missouri and the heat was terrific. Arkansas was fair but there was another slump in Mississippi, due to being two weeks too early. I cannot praise Manager R. M. Harvey too highly. He did the best he could. I sincerely hope that both Hoxie and Harvey get a new start and make good."

And so the "second" Jack Hoxie Circus of 1937 came to an end, only six weeks on the road, having a shorter life than even the "first" show. From the testimony given by Harry Metz and reports of others the troupers found themselves in the situation which Irving Berlin so dramatically pointed out in his classic song, "There's No Business Like Show Business," that "you might find yourself stranded out in the cold." For the Hoxie people it was not cold literally but they were indeed stranded out in the hot September sun in a little town in western Mississippi near the banks of the mighty river.

Those who still had a few quarters or could wire someone for train or bus money seemed to have no trouble getting on with another show. Cly Newton's Moon Bros. Circus was not far away and some went there as did Thurman Knight to join that show's advance brigade. Arthur Myers who played in the Hoxie band joined the band with the Dodson carnival.

Roger Boyd says he stayed with Hoxie until the end, then moved over to Barney Bros. and still later to Haag Bros. to finish out the 1937 season. He

The Jack Hoxie Circus in Millersburg, Ohio August 7, 1937 after the reorganization. The semi at bottom center was used to transport the elephant Mena. Circus World Museum collection.

also advises that in 1938 he took W. C. Richards' elephants over to Honest Bill's show now called Moon Bros. (later Savage Africa) and stayed half a season then went back "home" to the Jimmy Heron show, Famous Robbins.

After the finish of the Jack Hoxie show, very little was heard from Jack Hoxie personally for the remainder of the year. It is assumed he continued making personal appearances at theaters, rodeos, and other attractions, plus there was movie work in which he continued until 1942. He also operated the Jack Hoxie Broken Arrow Ranch for many years. It was a regular cattle ranch which also entertained guests, a "dude ranch" which was quite successful. It was located at Hereford, Arizona on the rim of the Huachuca Mountains, only seven miles from Mexico. Hoxie never tried it again with his own circus but he was not finished in the business. He was with Lewis Bros. in 1939, Bud Anderson in 1940 and in 1947 he was with Mills Bros.

Little is known of Cly Newton's circus activities after his Moon Bros. finished out the 1937 season, however as late as 1951 it was mentioned in the *Billboard* that he and a William Newton (presumably Honest Bill) had leased the Horne Bros. Circus from Harold Rumbaugh but operated it for only a short time using the title of James Allen's Trained Animal Circus. Dub Duggan recalls that in 1938, the year after the Hoxie failure, he was spending the summer with his family in Salt Lake City, Utah. Vi and Cly Newton joined them

and the two families moved by automobile to Seattle, Washington where his father had a nice house rented in the Greenwood section of the city. Dub's father, who had been in the automatic coin machine business, built a route of coin machines for Cly Newton to operate in the Pacific Northwest. It was named the Silver King Novelty Company. Cly left Seattle in the middle 1940s. At the last report he was in Miami where his sister, Bernice, widow of the late Frank Ketrow, a former circus owner, lived.

Looking back at the 1937 Jack Hoxie show we can observe that not only was it another of the many short lived circuses of that day but also another failed attempt by a western film star to make it as the owner of his own show. Buck Jones had failed with a fifteen car wild west show in 1929. In 1936, a year before Hoxie tried it, Ken Maynard's wild west show was another rail show framed on an ambitious scale that never really got started. However, no lesson was learned, and in 1938 came the most gigantic failure of them all when the brand new Col. Tim McCoy Real Wild West thirty car railer went broke in only a few weeks. Only Tom Mix had any real success but his circus lasted only five seasons, 1934-38.

Roger Boyd sums up the situation noting that in both 1937 and 1938 a number of shows, both good and bad, met their downfall, but the Jack Hoxie Circus was such a beautiful show that it should have lived.

The author would like to thank those who provided research information and illustrations in the preparation of this article. Thanks go to Bill McCarthy of the Circus World Museum, Roger Boyd, W. F. (Dub) Duggan, Jr., Don Marcks and Fred D. Pfening, Jr.



# WHEN GALESBURG WAS A CIRCUS TOWN: 1867-1872

By Steve Gossard

One of the most interesting periods in the history of Galesburg, Illinois was between 1867 and 1872 when the city was host to as many as three circuses at one time which established their winter quarters there. Just what impact this influx of show people might have had on the Galesburg community is not known, but the fact that they were drawn to this region of western Illinois is an interesting phenomenon in itself. These small circuses found Galesburg a convenient location from which to travel west during the summer tent season to reach the remote entertainment-hungry pioneer communities on the plains. Since these small wagon shows couldn't boast large menageries of exotic animals they would have found it difficult to compete with the larger circuses in the urban areas of the east. Sometimes they attracted some of the best performers, however, and were able to put on outstanding exhibitions. The main advantage of these smaller shows was their mobility. Where the larger circuses might have a great deal of difficulty traversing the narrow prairie roads (sometimes little better than paths or wheel ruts) the smaller circuses could travel to fairly remote areas with little difficulty.

Excursions out to the American frontier were not without their hazards for anyone, however. A large open canvas is always susceptible to high winds and lightning. Blowdowns were common and costly.<sup>1</sup> One would be hard pressed to find a sailmaker on the plains of Kansas. The great showman W. C. Coup once wrote of an experience in which his entire circus troupe, while traveling through an Indian reservation in Texas, was forced to run for their lives from a raging prairie fire. On November 7, 1873 the Old John Robinson Circus was attacked by Indians while traveling through Texas, and on November 22 at Jacksonville, Texas they were involved in a shootout with "roughs" in which three men were killed. Such incidents of violence were not necessarily confined to the western states, but were a hazard of any region

where people were hardened by harsh subsistence. The sensational aspect of circus exhibitions seemed to bring out the wilder range of human emotions.

As far back as the story can be traced, James T. Johnson brought a circus troupe to Macomb, Illinois from Kansas in 1867.<sup>2</sup> Johnson had the novel idea of building ring barns, "amphitheaters" as he called them, at

His name was Frank Gardner, and he would become one of the most outstanding circus athletes in the country.<sup>3</sup>

Calling his circus the James T. Johnson Iowa Circus and Rocky Mountain Menagerie, Johnson toured through Iowa during the regular circus season with the following troupe of performers: Mlle. Edith (probably Johnson's wife), Anna Cramer, Mast. Dan Ross,

James Smith, Sam Ostrander, John Key, Emma Ostrander, and others. In September Johnson advertised for work as "a famous horse trainer and rider." By October 19 Johnson's ring barn at Macomb was "nearly completed and is spoken of as being a convenient building for circus performance" with a troupe of performers consisting of J. C. Wallace; Franz, Joseph, Thomas, and Bobby Austin (trapeze performers and gymnasts); Mrs. Jas. T. Johnson; Mr. Hoyt; and Johnson's trick horse, Franklin.<sup>4</sup>

Charles Fowler, the popular circus clown, later wrote an account of Johnson's first winter in Macomb in the June 20, 1914 *Billboard*. Fowler described Johnson's ring barn as follows: "Arriving at Macomb, a place of about 1,500 or 2,000 inhabitants. . . I found Mr. Johnson with a small number of circus people, giving performances Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday nights, and a Sunday afternoon

matinee in a building made of rough boards nailed perpendicularly to a frame about the size and shape of a hundred foot round top as near as I can describe it. He called it an amphitheater. Inside were seats, much like those of the canvas tops, but stationary, arranged around a forty-two-foot ring. Upon one side was added a small square 'Lean to' for a dressing and property room."

Fowler's job behind the scenes was to approach investors in Burlington, Iowa with Johnson's scheme to build another ring barn there. Evidentially other scouts were also seeking investors in



Typical cut used in circus newspaper advertisements in the late 1860s.

Quincy, Macomb, Galesburg, and Burlington; and traveling through the winter months from one city to another performing with his circus troupe. In this way, it was thought, his troupe could show profit during the winter months rather than sit idle. Apparently Johnson was attracted by the ready availability of rail transportation on the Chicago, Burlington, and Quincy Railroad. At this time a young man was hired on as apprentice with the show.



Galesburg and Quincy, for about this time Johnson entered into partnership with Michael O'Connor, proprietor of a saloon and livery stable near the depot on Berrien Street in Galesburg.<sup>5</sup>

Fowler enlisted two brothers in Burlington, Ad and Pete Sells, owners of an auction store and a bar and billiard room, to finance Johnson's enterprise. Fowler's article included a program of the Johnson circus as presented with the first performance in Burlington on November 2, 1867 in Johnson's newly constructed "amphitheater and opera house" on Market Street. Johnson intended presenting two performances per week at Burlington and continuing with four more stands weekly at Macomb, Quincy, or Galesburg. Fowler was to lead off the performance, followed by the Austin Brothers doing a trapeze and horizontal bar routine. This was followed by Mademoiselle Edith, a "Beautiful Accomplished and Daring Equestrienne" in a scenic riding display. David Gillam performed a bareback hurdle riding routine, followed by a trick clown routine performed by Mr Hoyt. Then Joseph Key performed a two, four, and six horse riding act, and James Johnson himself closed the show with his "challenge TRICK HORSE, FRANKLIN." Admission to the show was 50 cents for adults and 25 cents for children under 12. A "superb cornet and string band" provided the music.<sup>6</sup>

Though Frank Gardner later distinguished himself as a great circus leaper he was probably apprenticed to Johnson to learn the art of bareback riding in 1867, since Gardner's occupation was advertised in 1874 as "Bareback hurdle act, principal (riding) act, leaps, double somersault over horses, first class tumbler."<sup>7</sup>

Fowler portrayed Johnson as something of a scallywag in his 1914 article.

Through mismanagement Johnson's show didn't "pan" out: "Johnson boarded all the people, and as I laid in bed the second night after our arrival (in Macomb) from Burlington I overheard Johnson and his brother, Harvey, plotting to run off with the pad and trick horse, and the next morning the wires notified the Sells Brothers, and the first train brought all the necessary law representatives and documents and the stuff was shipped to Burlington. Under my care and direction the stock was put out in a stock field, the other stuff boxed and stored."

Apparently Michael O'Connor became heir to some of Johnson's circus property. While continuing with his livery business, O'Connor opened his own circus in 1868. At this time a young lad

**COMING!! COMING!!**



**Lake's  
HIPPOOLYMPAID!**

—AND—

**Mammoth Circus.**

**Organized 27 Years Ago,**

And added to every year until it has become

**THE LARGEST AND BEST CIRCUS  
ON EARTH,**

**Comprising 240 Men and Horses!**

**ALL BAREBACK RIDERS.**

The only Traveling Exhibition in the World  
that

**Do What they Advertise!**

This Champion Company of America

**WILL EXHIBIT AT  
Keokuk**  
FOR ONE DAY ONLY,

**Thursday, June 11, 1868.**

**Admission 50 Cts.; Children 25.**

Doors open at 1 and 7 o'clock p. m.  
June 2 w2t d6t

A groom was fatally injured while the Lake Circus was in Galesburg in 1868. Pfening Archives.

ran away from his home in Petersburg, Illinois to join O'Connor's wagon

show. This was Harry Lamkin, who later become known as an accomplished "equalibrist" or "foot juggler." Lamkin, probably inspired by these developments in Galesburg, later built his own ring barn in Petersburg where he attracted some of the most talented circus artists in the country to winter there with himself and his extensive and versatile family of circus performers. Since O'Connor's ad for 1870 stated that he was beginning his third circus season, his show apparently first opened in 1868, though no record of O'Connor's first season has yet been found.<sup>8</sup>

Far from being out of the game for keeps, Johnson somehow gained financing and reorganized his show in 1868. In future years Johnson would exhibit a talent for securing finances even after repeated failures. Through the summer tenting season the J. T. Johnson & Co.'s Variety Equestrian Combination toured Illinois and the "west." He was playing Galva, Illinois June 27 and Butler July 30, by November 14 he had constructed his "amphitheater" in Galesburg and was reported as "giving good performances" and anticipating a financial success.<sup>9</sup>

An unhappy side note to the 1868 season occurred when Lake's Circus played in Galesburg in early August. A groom named John Roddy was thrown from his seat on the ticket wagon. He was taken to the American House, where the landlord ordered his removal, which the attending physician stated was partly responsible for the unfortunate fellow's death.<sup>10</sup> It seems that not all Galesburg folks were hospitable to circus people.

The James T. Johnson & Co.'s United Circus started out from Macomb on May 1, 1869. This was a wagon show with "a new band chariot, and new baggage vans." The company on opening at Macomb included Madam Worland, Annie Worland, Johnny Worland, David Quil, Harvey Johnson (James' brother), Madam Edith, Mrs. J. T. Johnson, James Smith (clown), and publicity agent J. White. Touring Illinois and Iowa in July of 1869 they were said to be playing to "crowded canvases" with "a very good show, indeed." This was probably not an exaggeration, for the Johnson show had a varied program of exceptional talent that season. In mid-season the Johnson show had expanded somewhat, the troupe now consisting of Johnson's own trick horse, Orlando; Madam Worland, equestrienne; Dobson Brothers, gymnasts and acrobats; La Petite Anna Worland and Mme. Edith, equestriennes; David Gillan, bareback rider; Updegraff and Bonham, horizon-



tal bar performers; Little Johnny Worland, contortionist; Master Frank (probably Frank Gardner), "Little horse-man;" and clowns and jesters James M. Smith, H. Gibbons, and Mons. De-Gouche. "Little Johnny Worland" has been called the greatest circus leaper of all time for accomplishing in later years the "big trick." Worland, in 1874, accomplished the incredible triple somersault from a springboard at St. Louis, Missouri, and again performed the trick twice in 1881 at Eau Claire and LaCrosse, Wisconsin. This feat was thought to be impossible for many years, and missed attempts had proven fatal for several other outstanding leapers. Most of Worland's contemporaries considered it too fool-hardy to even attempt the stunt.<sup>11</sup>

By the end of July Johnson's circus had moved into Minnesota and was doing well. They planned to travel through Wisconsin and Illinois for the rest of the season and into the southern states when the "weather moderates." In October Johnson's circus had returned to Illinois and at Cherry Valley on September 8 "one of the Gillian Brothers, gymnast, fell from the trapeze and was killed."<sup>12</sup>

The Michael O'Connor & Co.'s Great Western Circus was organized in Galesburg in May and opened the season there on May 17. The O'Connor show was anticipating a tour through Wisconsin and Minnesota. The troupe included Madam Marie Macarte; Mrs. R. H. Beawick (Beswick); P. H. Seaman, clown; R. H. Beswick and Adolph Gonzales, principle leapers; the Austin Brothers, trapeze and horizontal bars; Dan Cross, bareback and hurdle rider; Ed Scofield, light and heavy balancer; Master Willie Clark, double pony hurdle act; an "educated" mule; and a trick horse. Dan Rhodes served as ringmaster, P. H. Seaman was equestrian director, A. Briggs was treasurer, and George Steele was general agent. The O'Connor circus returned to Galesburg after nine weeks to recruit new stock and repaint and refurbish the wagons, and to "make ready for the fall campaign after harvest." Circuses traveling through the farm country generally tried to coordinate their activities to correspond to the seasonal economics of agriculture. The O'Connor show planned on going out once again August 12 with the same company plus some new features. O'Connor was then advertising for a "good artist out of employment." The O'Connor show may have been hampered by weather problems that year which had brought them back to home base. The G. G. Grady Circus

## G. G. GRADY'S Unprecedented Old-Fashioned AMERICAN CIRCUS For 1869.



### THE BEST ON THE ROAD!

G. G. GRADY, Proprietor and Manager.  
JOHN R. LANE, Equestrian Director.  
W. M. MYERS, Treasurer.  
A. R. SCOTT, General Business Manager.

WILL EXHIBIT AT

## CARLINVILLE

ON

TUESDAY, August 10, 1869.

This is one of the largest organizations in the United States. The entire outfit is entirely new and the most complete of any Circus company travelling. Mr. Grady has spared no pains or expense in procuring the best talent in the country, and will positively present

**More New Features**  
than were ever given under one pavilion.

Mrs. LILY LANE,  
the ONLY FEMALE CLOWN that has ever been introduced before the American public and the only one the world has ever produced.



### FOUR STAR CLOWNS

will appear at every entertainment, of whom are Mr. G. G. GRADY in his original comedies, Yankee jokes, &c. G. H. GRADY, second clown, in his Irish and Dutch delineations, is highly comical. Mr. PORT FAUST,

G. G. Grady's Circus played Galesburg July 20, 1869. Circus World Museum collection.

reported playing in Galesburg July 20 experiencing "bad luck" because of excessive rains.<sup>13</sup>

In 1870 three shows opened the circus season in Galesburg. A new circus called the John W. Robinson & Co. Circus was organized, which prompted the veteran showman, John Robinson

of Cincinnati, Ohio, to begin calling his circus the "Old" John Robinson Circus, and to advertise the distinction between his long established reputation and the upstart, John Robinson, of Galesburg. With the Old John Robinson's Circus advertisement June 17, 1871 in the *Galesburg Republican* newspaper was a statement: "Old John Robinson, the Leviathan, is triumphantly marching on, and will positively exhibit at Galesburg, Illinois."

"Don't confuse this Gigantic Organization with . . . the so-called J. W. (Galesburg, Illinois) Robinson, a fraud, humbug and impostor, seeking to entice and delude the people of Illinois into his rat trap of concern, by falsely representing himself and show as Simon pure, who has a wheezy cage of half-starved bears, for it is in no way, shape or manner connected with . . . them but is the "OLD ORIGINAL."

One wonders whether the advance publicity agents were intentionally slandering the name of a hometown business by using this standard advertisement for the "Old John" show, even using the name of the city in his blistering criticism.

The John W. Robinson show was planning to open in Galesburg April 30 with the following company: Madam Amelia Bridges, equestrienne; La Petite Annie Carroll, child rider; Master Willie Carroll, bareback somersault rider; Mr. and Mrs. W. B. Carroll, two horse rider; Mr. and Mrs. Sam Reinhart, leaper; Mr. and Mrs. Philo Nathans; Mrs. Nellie Clark; Chas. Seaman; Masters Eddie and Leo; the Antonio Brothers, W. C., and W., gymnasts and acrobats; the Whitney Brothers, James and Andrew, trapeze; James Ellsler; Willie Carroll; Annie Carroll; Billie Andrews, clown; and Harry Gibbons. R. Beswick; W. Wolf; and Leo, Eddie, Wash, and Charles Antonio were listed as tumblers and leapers. Obviously some of the performers were changing from one Galesburg circus to another from one season to the next. This is an indication that at least some of the performers were establishing themselves as residents, at least temporarily, of Galesburg. Sam Reinhart was already a distinguished leaper by 1870.

By 1872 he would be publishing a challenge to "outleap any man on the continent" for a wager of \$500. W. B. Carroll was serving as equestrian director and J. A. McKenzie was named as proprietor and manager. This leaves the question open as to who John W. Robinson was, since he was not a performer and apparently had nothing to do with the management of the show. The Robinson show actually began its



season in Galesburg May 4 and was to play Monmouth before traveling into Iowa and Missouri. Sam Reinhart did not appear with the first appearance of the J. W. Robinson show in Galesburg due to a sprained ankle.<sup>14</sup>

The J. W. Robinson circus entered Iowa in May of 1870 playing Rock Island, Illinois on the 17th and Davenport, Iowa on the 18th. By June they were in Wisconsin calling themselves the J. W. Robinson & Co.'s Excelsior Circus. The company was listed as the same as before. The following article appeared in the *New York Clipper* of July 16: "MURDER OF TWO CIRCUS MEN.-While John W. Robinson & Co's Circus were exhibiting in Potosi, Wisconsin, a man named Brent persistently attempted to create a disturbance during the entire day; he had been driven away from the main door of the large tent several times, when he went to the side show and had a wordy quarrel with Phil Milligan, the proprietor. A short time after Milligan went to the hotel for supper, and Brent followed him, presenting himself at the door of the dining-room, he drew a revolver and discharged its contents indiscriminately among the guests, mortally wounding two men, Archy McArther, the boss canvas man, he having been shot through the head, and Ridgeway, a driver, shot through the lungs. Brent then ran out of the house, and was met by John King, the boss hostler, who shot him through the arm, but he succeeded in making good his escape. The company, aided by many armed citizens, turned out on horseback in pursuit, but were unable to find any trace of him. Particulars of the affray were telegraphed in various directions, which caused the arrest at Potosi on July 2nd. . . . Richard Beeswick, vaulter, recently joined this circus at Plattsville, Wis."

The J. W. Robinson show was back in Iowa in July and August. During the winter months they toured the southern states. By January 1871 they were touring through Florida and Georgia with Col. Fred Bailey working as their advance publicity agent. The *New York Clipper* reported that "while at Lodipoka, Ala., this company was attacked by roughs, who shot three of the men and seriously stabbed John King, the boss hostler. The men have since recovered though they had to be left behind the show."

Working with a road show could be a dangerous business, as John King could testify that year. A *New York Clipper* article dated November 19, 1870 stated, "Shooting Circus Managers appears to be a favorite amusement with some

## GO TO M. O'Connor's

**M. O'CONNOR & CO.'S  
GREAT WESTERN  
CIRCUS!  
(Reorganized for the Season of 1870.)  
100 MEN AND 110 HORSES!**



## Great Western CIRCUS!

M. O'Connor & Co. Great Western Circus used this newspaper ad during the 1870 season. Circus World Museum collection.

people. . . ." William Lake, owner of Lake's Circus was murdered August 21, 1869 at Granby, Missouri. Harry Whitby, of Hemmings, Cooper, & Whitby's Circus was fatally shot November 4,

1870 at Raysville, Mississippi. Col. C. T. Ames, manager of the Crescent City Circus, was shot to death at Dawson, Georgia November 2. William Munn, boss canvas man of a circus playing at Lauderdale Springs, Mississippi on November 9, was killed by a blast from a double barreled shotgun on the city street by a saloon keeper. Occasionally the rough-cut circus laborers would fall out with city gangs, as in the "stabbing affair" between circus "attaches" with Campbell's Circus at Elkton, Maryland, April 29, and a group of city people. And at times circus people would fall out among themselves, as in the murder of William Cooper, a performer with a circus at Yazo, Michigan May 21 by Frank Williams, a watchman with the same show.<sup>15</sup>

Also in 1870, the Michael O'Connor & Co.'s Great Western Circus and the James T. Johnson & Co.'s Circus and Performing Animals show both opened in Galesburg May 14. The *Galesburg Republican* reported on May 12: "Two shows-J. T. Johnson and M. O'Connor's-will exhibit in this city May 14th. They are both first-class shows, and amusement lovers will be compelled to visit both to decide which is the best. Go and hear the song and the comical joke, and see the elephant stand on his tail."

Although neither show was likely to have an elephant the O'Connor circus could boast "100 men and 110 horses," two trick mules, "Leviathan," and "Ned." Ned was said to be "the only spotted educated mule in the world." O'Connor's ad stated that Ned "has never been rode around the ring and the sum of twenty-five dollars will be paid to any man or boy who will ride him around the ring three times." The O'Connor circus was to play at the Old Show Grounds at 2 and 7 o'clock PM. The company of the O'Connor circus was listed in the *New York Clipper* as follows: M. O'Connor, proprietor; J. S. Keys, equestrian manager; C. L. Fowler, clown; Beswick; Austin Brothers; Harry Lamkin; Gonzales; Gardner; R. W. Tryner; Billy Banks; C. Patrick; and the hurdle rider, Dan Cross. George K. Steele was contracting agent; H. Thompson, assisting agent; and John Ricksby, treasurer. They anticipated playing Council Bluffs, Iowa before touring Nebraska and Kansas.<sup>16</sup>

O'Connor had hired Frank Gardner away from the Johnson show, where he had been an apprentice. Gardner left the O'Connor show and returned to the Johnson circus later in the season, but he must have become acquainted with Harry Lamkin while traveling with the



O'Connor circus if he hadn't before. In 1884 Gardner and Lamkin would strike up a partnership with James Donovan, and the Gardner, Lamkin, and Donovan Circus toured South America for the first time that year.<sup>17</sup>

The itinerary for wagon shows was not so rigid as in later years when circuses had to conform to railroad timetables. These shows were free to go wherever weather and economic conditions appeared more favorable from one day to the next, although it was an advantage to plan ahead to give publicity agents a chance to pepper the town with posters. The O'Connor show moved south from Iowa to LeRoy, Kansas and then into Missouri: Greenfield, Walnut Grove, Springfield, and camping at Cone Spring the last of July. They were now planning to travel north to the Wisconsin River. The reason for this change in plans was explained as follows: "The drought is so severe that they have great difficulty in procuring a sufficient supply of water." They played Macon City, Maryville, Savanna, and St. Joseph in mid-September. While in Missouri Mr. Walter Wentworth, "the boneless man" joined the show.<sup>18</sup>

The rivalry between O'Connor and Johnson seems to have been quite spirited. In August Tommy Ward, a clown with the Johnson show left to join O'Connor. At about this time Frank Gardner must have left O'Connor to join Johnson, for he was not listed among the company with the O'Connor circus. The company with O'Connor was now: Dan Cross, principal rider; Ed Schofield, light and heavy balancer; leapers Frank Castle, Fred Castle, and Willie Batcheler; the Austin Brothers, flying trapeze; Charles Lee Fowler, principal clown; and J. S. Keys, two and four horse rider. Billy Banks was in charge of the minstrel show. It bears repeating that Fowler had been Johnson's agent in Burlington in 1867, and he had still been carrying a grudge against Johnson as late as 1914 when he wrote his article for *Billboard*. William Batcheler would later become acknowledged as one of the greatest leapers in the country and the bitter rivalry which later existed between him and Frank Gardner would be a matter of public attention. By October 1 it was reported that the Michael O'Connor show had gone into winter quarters at Hiawatha, Kansas, possibly forced to fold up early due to weather conditions.<sup>19</sup>

The personnel with the Jas. T. Johnson circus was not listed early in the season in 1870 but it was stated that C. W. Kidder was serving as advance agent and they planned to begin the season

touring through Illinois at Maquon, Elmwood, Farmington, Canton, Cuba, and Lewiston. In June they moved into Iowa and Missouri playing Bloomfield, Iowa; Lancaster, Green Top, Kirksville, LaPlata, Shelbyville, Shelbyna, Paris, Moberly, Huntsville, Salisbury, Keytesville, Brunswick, Dewit, and Carolton, Missouri. *The New York Clipper* stated that Johnson had had to raise his canvas "up fifty feet" (meaning up to fifty

feet) to accommodate the trapeze rigging and so were not actually performing 50 feet in the air. The customary height for a double trapeze bar in later years was 30 to 40 feet from the ground. The fact that neither of them was seriously injured is possibly an indication that they were working with a safety net below them. Regardless of whether they used a net or not the Leopolds must have presented a sensational act.

In July the Johnson show played Nevada City, Montevallo, Stockton, Greenfield, LaMar, Carthage, Minersville, Columbus, Osage Mission, Humbolt, Canville, Chetopa, and Baxter Springs, Kansas where two years later Marshal C. N. Taylor shot and wounded Harry Spaulding, manager of Dan Rice's Circus. Taylor was shot and killed later on my Mayor J. R. Boyd. This was the wild west. While playing in Missouri in July Johnny Davenport left the show to join DeHaven's Circus. By the 1890s the Davenport family would be firmly established among the best known riding groups in the country. The Johnson troupe was listed as Gillian Brothers, flying trapeze; Master Frank (probably Gardner), principal rider; Chavant, horizontal bar; Mlle. Edith, bareback rider; Master Tommy Ward, leaper; and George and Blanche Leopold, double trapeze. The Johnson circus moved into Kansas, and back into Missouri in August playing Ozark, Marshfield, Hartsville, Houston, Hulton Valley, West Plain, Thompsonville, Chance, and Neils. Apparently the drought was keeping them from moving farther west. There Tommy Ward left the show to join O'Connor.<sup>21</sup>

On August 27 the Jas. T. Johnson Circus was attached by the performers at Little Rock, Arkansas, "Leopold and Rivers holding the principal claim," reported the September 10, 1870 *New York Clipper*. The canvas was advertised to be sold on the 29th. The following issue reported: "George Leopold, gymnast, writing from Little Rock, Arkansas, on September 1st says: 'Johnson's circus bust up here and was sold on August 31st. Johnson will not agree to the money being divided until the law compels him on the meeting of the courts on the 22nd of November and the consequence is everybody is short of money.'"

No further reference was found to the Johnson failure of 1870 and it is possible that the performers consented to accept partial reimbursement out of court rather than wait until November.

On March 6 of 1871 the John W. Robinson circus was playing Rome, Georgia en route to Alabama. It can be assumed by this early date that the J. W.

## O'CONNOR'S GREAT WESTERN CIRCUS!

Will Positively Exhibit at

### GALESBURG

— ON —

### SATURDAY, JUNE 3, '71

IN THE

### AFTERNOON AND EVENING.

This Mammoth Establishment Represents

### 100 MEN AND HORSES!

With New and Splendid  
Decorated Wagons, Chariots, etc., producing at  
at each Performance the

### Best Talent of this Country and Europe,

And the Finest Stud of

### TRAINED HORSES & PONIES

On the Continent.

Admission, 50 Cts. Children Under 10, 25 Cts.

Coming recommended as it does, from all  
parts of the country, it cannot fail to give en-  
tire satisfaction. *J. M. PRATT, Agent.*  
Galesburg, May 27, 1871.

The O'Connor Circus played Galesburg, Illinois June 3, 1871. Circus World Museum collection.

feet) to accommodate the trapeze rigging of George and Blanche Leopold, which was said to be the "highest trapeze act in the country." When the circus played Carthage, Illinois it was stated that "their urge led them to attempt too much, the consequence of which was that they fell to the ground and got a severe bruising, but fortunately not enough to prevent their reappearance as usual." It was later reported that the fall was caused by "the breaking of rope that supported the beam" from which the Leopolds' trapeze bars were suspended.<sup>20</sup> Of course the Leopolds were hanging from trapeze bars which were hung from an overhead rig-



Robinson show had not returned to Galesburg during the winter season but had continued playing winter dates throughout the south. A complete roster of this circus was not published for 1871 in the *New York Clipper* and they may have continued with the same company as they had carried in 1870. By mid-July the show had traveled north into Iowa playing Muscatine, Washington, Sigourney, and Osceola planning to go on to Knoxville, Indianola, and Winterset. On September 5 at Independence, Iowa it was said that Sam Reinhart while with the J. W. Robinson show vaulted over 18 horses. The *New York Clipper* voiced the opinion that "if this is so it surpasses the best recorded performance of George M. Kelly, the champion vaulter." This prompted Reinhart to issue a challenge in January with a wager of \$500 leaping against any man in the country. For some time such challenges were ignored but later in the decade these challenges became quite heated and took on a personal nature. By November the J. W. Robinson circus had swung south to Corinth, Mississippi. Apparently these small wagon shows were completely transient and did not find it necessary to establish permanent quarters anywhere. It is doubtful that the J. W. Robinson show ever returned to Galesburg after 1870.<sup>22</sup>

The Michael O'Connor & Co.'s Great Western Circus opened once again in Galesburg on June 3, 1871 with afternoon and evening performances with an admission price of 50 cents for adults and 25 cents for children under 10. O'Connor advertised the "Best Talent of This Country and Europe, and the Finest Stud of Trained Horses And Ponies On the Continent." The *Galesburg Republican* of June 3, stated "M. O'Connor's circus unfurls its canvas to the breeze to-day. Everybody who likes fun should go to the invincible Mike's show." They followed playing Peoria June 7 or 8 and moved into Indiana in mid-June playing St. Paul, Minnesota in July. In September it was reported that O'Connor's show had been purchased complete by John Dunbar of Swan City, Nebraska, and would establish winter quarters in that city. O'Connor, it was said, would start from Galesburg the following spring "with an entire new outfit, a circus and menagerie combined." Unfortunately no record has been found of the personnel of the O'Connor show of 1871.<sup>23</sup>

In 1870 Frank Gardner left the John Robinson circus. By 1871 he had attracted the attention of one of the major circuses and was traveling with Van Amburgh & Co.'s Great Golden Menagerie.

## SMITH & BAIRD'S EXCELSIOR CIRCUS !



FOR ONE DAY ONLY!  
AT KEWANEE,  
Monday, June 3d.

The Largest and Most  
Complete Circus in  
the United States.

THIS IS NO DEIVIDED CONCERN, HALF  
CIRCUS AND HALF MENAGERIE,  
BUT ONE LARGE SHOW MADE  
UP FROM THREE OF THE  
BEST CIRCUSES IN THE  
COUNTRY.

The following list of Well Known Performers will  
Speak for themselves.

BEHOLD THE ARRAY!



MAD. CARRON!

The Only Lady Two Horse Rider of the Profession. She will mount her Beautiful Arabian steed, and after performing wonders such as would appall a mameluke, will place her child erect upon her head. Round and round the ring they seem to fly, she erect and immovable as a statue, her standing unconcerned upon her head, adorned, graceful and enchanting as a fairy on a moulded lawn.

The Smith & Baird's Excelsior Circus played Kewanee, Illinois on June 3, 1872, a few weeks after showing in Galesburg. Circus World Museum collection.

erie. He might have hired on the show when it toured through Illinois in September and October playing the Galesburg area at Geneseo, Cambridge,

Toulon, and Peoria.<sup>24</sup> Through the following years Gardner's accomplishments would become more sensational and gain national recognition.

Surprising enough, after his financial trouble of the previous year James T. Johnson was again touring with his circus in 1871. Just where Johnson had spent the winter of 1870-1871 and how he secured financing for the 1871 season is a mystery. In June he played Evansville, Indiana. On September 1 his circus reportedly collapsed at Gallipolis, Ohio. Later that month Johnson wrote to the *New York Clipper*: "James T. Johnson writes us that his circus did not 'bust up' at Gallipolis, Ohio, but that he merely sold his steamboat, paid off his company, and shipped to Cincinnati, where he is reorganizing to travel south during the coming winter."<sup>25</sup>

The year 1872 is the last that this author has found any circus using Galesburg as its winter quarters. Only one circus organized in Galesburg that year, calling itself "Smith and Baird's Excelsior Circus."<sup>26</sup> It is possible that Michael O'Connor had a hand in organizing this circus, but as yet no information has been found to indicate that O'Connor organized any circus under his own name after 1871.

Smith and Baird's circus started from Galesburg May 16, 1872 with 30 wagons, 125 men, 150 horses, and a company of performers. The company was as follows: Miss Carron, rider; Fred Castle, somersault rider; Mme. Marine, principal riding act; F. P. Chavat, crystal pyramids (a balancing act using bottles); Prof. Carron and his two children, acrobats; and leapers and tumblers the Leslie Brothers, Frank Ashton, Harry Blood, Willis Wolfe, R. Gillam, Oliver Dodge, Frank Rivers, the Marble Brothers, Charles Benny, and William Corson. The clowns with the show were Ned Turner, John C. Rivers, and Harry Gibbons and the thoroughbred stallion, Fire King, was a feature attraction. Apparently Frank Castle was a native of Galesburg. An article from the *New York Clipper* April 13 stated that the mother of the acrobats, Fred and Frank Castle, had died at Galesburg March 20 at age 43. The Smith and Baird circus was among the small shows which was listed by *New York Clipper* late in the 1872 season under the heading "the small shows that started early in the season, but since succumbed to bad business."<sup>27</sup>

After two seasons of failure any other circus manager might have been thoroughly discouraged, but James T. Johnson came back again in 1872. In March



"Prof. James T. Johnson" was listed as manager of Romelli & Co.'s Great Novelty Circus and Performing Animal Show. This might have been a pseudonym for the circus which was called James T. Johnson's Circus and Trained Animal Show in November, or Johnson might have taken over control of the Romelli circus when it failed late in the season. It was stated that Johnson was taking his circus south on the steamer *Transit* at that time with several performers.<sup>28</sup>

Thus Galesburg faded from the scene as host city for circus business. Other wagon shows, such as the Sells Brothers Circus, would grow to enormous

recently, we are informed by a correspondent, in La Fouché county, Louisiana, for assault and battery committed upon 'Dick Parker.' It is also alleged by the correspondent that said 'Parker' was driven from the John Robinson show and commenced to follow the Johnson circus. As soon as the proprietor, as is alleged, saw him imposing on his patrons, he ordered him to leave, which Parker refused to do, and Johnson 'went for him' pugilistically, whereupon 'Parker' fled, and proceeded to Donaldsonville, La., where he swore out a state warrant, and in company with others went in pursuit of Johnson. When the latter was arrested he took his witnesses with him and drove to court. On arrival Parker was told, as alleged, that immediately after Johnson's trail he would be arrested on another charge, and he fled from the town leaving Johnson free." The author of this article seems so concerned with qualifying the statement with so many "as alleged" that one wonders if the "correspondent's" credibility were in question. Yet if this statement is true it may be an indication that Johnson was being careful to keep the grifters off of the circus lot, at that time, at least.

The show closed in East St. Louis and Johnson advertised for circus talent to apply for work with his show there. He was then planning to tour the southern states and he may have been the J. Johnson listed among the circus people present aboard the steamboat *George C. Wolff* when the boilers exploded on the Mississippi above Helena, Arkansas.<sup>30</sup>

By 1881 Jas. T. Johnson had returned to Kansas seeking the frontier towns where his wagon show would not be overshadowed by the larger circuses. Orin C. King detailed Johnson's later career for *Bandwagon* in 1986.<sup>31</sup> Over the following years Johnson and his circus were to be called "Bums," "Deadbeats," and "fraud," often leaving a trail of debts behind his tours of Kansas towns. Johnson sold out or went broke several times, often engendering criticism or legal proceedings as a result of debts, yet each time he managed to acquire financial backing. If nothing more can be said of James T. Johnson

one thing is for sure; he was a born talker. A real showman.

#### FOOTNOTES

1. *New York Clipper*, March 22, 1873; July 19, 1873; September 3, 1870.
2. *Bandwagon*, September-October 1986, "James T. Johnson and the Great Western Circus," by Orin C. King.
3. *New York Clipper*, September 12, 1891.
4. *Ibid.*, April 13, 1867; September 7, 1867; October 26, 1867.
5. *New York Clipper*, September 12, 1891, *Galesburg City Directory* 1875-1876 p. 103.
6. *New York Clipper*, December 7, 1867.
7. *New York Clipper*, September 5, 1874.
8. *Bloomington Daily Pantagraph*, December 15, 1898; *New York Clipper*, May 15, 1869; June 25, 1870.
9. *New York Clipper*, November 14, 1868.
10. *Ibid.*, August 15, 1868.
11. *Ibid.*, April 10, 1869; July 13, 1869; *Bandwagon*, January-February 1964, "Truth or Fiction, Legend or Fact," by Pierre Coudere.
12. *New York Clipper*, July 31, 1869; October 30, 1869.
13. *New York Clipper*, May 15, 1869; August 7, 1869; July 24, 1869.
14. *New York Clipper*, May 7, 1870; August 6, 1870; August 6, 1870; January 13, 1872; May 14, 1870.
15. *Ibid.*, May 21, 1870; June 25, 1870; August 27, 1870; February 4, 1871; September 4, 1871; September 4, 1869; November 12, 1870; November 26, 1870; May 7, 1870; June 18, 1870.
16. *Galesburg Republican*, May 12, 1870; *New York Clipper*, June 25, 1870.
17. *Ibid.*, March 13, 1886; *Billboard*, February 22, 1930.
18. *New York Clipper*, August 6, 1870;
19. *Ibid.*, August 27, 1870; October 1, 1870;
20. *Ibid.*, May 21, 1870; June 18, 1870; July 2, 1870.
21. *Ibid.*, July 16, 1872; July 23, 1870; August 27, 1870.
22. *Ibid.*, March 18, 1871; July 22, 1871; January 2, 1872; November 12, 1871.
23. *Ibid.*, June 10, 1871; June 17, 1871; July 1, 1871; September 16, 1871.
24. *Ibid.*, September 30, 1871; October 14, 1871.
25. *Ibid.*, September 23, 1871; September 30, 1871.
26. *Ibid.*, April 13, 1872.
27. *Ibid.*, May 25, 1872; November 23, 1872.
28. *Ibid.*, March 9, 1872; November 23, 1872.
29. *Always the Young Strangers*, Sandburg, Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1953 pp. 196 and 241.
30. *New York Clipper*, January 18, 1873; April 26, 1873; May 31, 1873; July 19, 1873; October 4, 1873; September 20, 1873.
31. Orin King, *Bandwagon*, September-October 1986.



This drawing was used in circus newspaper advertisements in the early 1870s.

proportions to distinguish their cities as significant circus towns, but Galesburg would not be one of these. Michael O'Connor quit show business to maintain his livery stable, which was listed in 1877-1878 city directory. Carl Sandburg recalled Michael O'Connor's "cheap" livery stable near his home on Berrien Street in his detailed autobiography of the 1880s and 1890s, but made no reference to O'Connor's circus days.<sup>29</sup> Apparently Michael O'Connor's circus was past recall by most Galesburg citizens at that time. James T. Johnson eventually moved his operations back into the Kansas prairie.

In the winter of 1873 Johnson's "Novelty Circus" traveled the Mississippi, probably by steamboat, as far north as Barnard, Arkansas. Returning to New Orleans, the Johnson show traveled by steamboat to Cairo, where it was said that it would turn west. Instead, in true wildcat form, Johnson set out to tour Illinois once again. An article from the the *New York Clipper* dated February 12, 1873 stated: "James T. Johnson, circus manager, was arrested



# THE 1988 CIRCUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY CONVENTION

By Fred D. Pfening III

**T**he 1988 Circus Historical Society convention kicked off on the evening of August 10 at the Burlington, Vermont Econo Lodge with a showing of rare films from the vaults of the Circus World Museum. Included was color footage of the Ringling and Cole show in the 1940s, and the ever popular short subject of the 1904 Barnum and Bailey parade.

Activities got into full swing the next morning as the faithful gathered in the Big Apple Circus big top to watch a demonstration of camel training by Bobby Gibbs and of elephant training by Bill Woodcock. Using a cordless microphone as they put their charges through their paces, they offered insights into their training methods and answered numerous questions from the rapt audience. Gibbs invited members to enter the ring to give them a trainer's eye view of a camel act. Needless to say, their presentation was a resounding success.

That afternoon the attendees reconvened at the Econo Lodge, the convention headquarters, to listen to the historical presentations which were particularly strong this year. Copeland MacAllister led off with a paper on the "Origins of the Forty Horse Hitch." He was followed by Joanne Joys who discussed "Clyde Beatty and the New York Press." Frank Robie concluded this session with a biography of "The Loretta Twins."

In the evening more papers were given. Richard Flint started with a slide show on "Types of Circusiana." Robert Kitchen was next with a monograph on "Cooke's Royal Circus and Grizzly Adams' Bear Menagerie." The final paper was John Polacsek's "Lewis Bros. Circus, the Season of 1941 (the off season)." Many of these papers will appear in future issues of the *Bandwagon*.

The following day's proceedings began in the Big Apple big top where Paul Binder and his wife Katja Schumann-Binder made a superb presentation on the training of liberty horses. Schumann rehearsed her act while her husband pointed out the subtle cues she used to direct her horses and explain her technique. Later they answered a thousand and one questions from the audience. Many members remarked that it

was the finest single session they had ever experienced at a Circus Historical Society convention.

That afternoon the CHS attended the Big Apple Circus matinee. Members who had not previously seen a Big Apple performance were stunned by the high quality of the show which was first rate in every respect.

The banquet was held in the Econo Lodge that evening. After a buffet featuring turkey and roast beef, Fred Pfening III, acting as master of ceremonies, noted that Fred Pfening Jr. observed his 27th year as editor of *Bandwagon* in 1988, a record for circus related publications. The elder Pfening received a well deserved standing ovation in recognition. Alan Slifka, chairman of the board of the Big Apple Circus, next addressed the group on the history and background of the Big Apple Circus. Dominique Jando, associate director of the Big Apple Circus, followed by discussing the Big Apple's artistic philosophy. The evening concluded with a candid talk by Barbara Woodcock, the girl with the auburn hair and former center ring performer with Ringling, about her life long career in the circus business. The audience laughed and cried at her remarks; mostly they laughed. She was a smash.

The final day of the meeting started with a showing of 19th century posters from the collection of the Shelburne Museum. The museum has many unique pre-Civil War bills as well as a



The Big Apple Circus in Shelburne, Vermont. All photos by Fred D. Pfening, Jr.

number of fabulous examples from the 1880-1900 period. It was a great treat for the members to view such an excellent holding. The museum staff also discussed their restoration and conservation techniques which was very informative.

The rest of the day was spent viewing the wonders of the Shelburne Museum, which recreates 19th century American life and is one of the finest museums of

Dick Flint, on left and John Polacsek, on right, display posters from Charlie Simmons, as Fred Pfening III does the auctioneering.







This rare John B. Doris Circus lithograph from the Shelburne Museum Archives was displayed for CHS members.

its type in the country. Among its treasures are Roy Arnold's great model circus parade. It is housed in its own building which also contains many rare lithographs. The museum also has a fine collection of wood carvings, including a number of corner statues from 19th century parade wagons.

After dinner, the conventioners gathered at the Econo Lodge for the sixth annual CHS auction. Fred Pfenning III, Dick Flint and John Polacsek

CHS. This was mainly due to the wonderful gift to the organization by the late Charles Simmons who donated his collection to the auction. About fifteen other members donated material, including Herb Hoyt and John L. Sullivan who were not in attendance but wanted to make a contribution. The auction had many high points as long runs of Ringling-Barnum, Cole and Dailey programs, numerous couriers, scrap books, and scores of books and posters from the Simmons collection were bid.

The finest single item was probably an 1893 Carl Hagenbeck poster donated by Eva Amidon, and among the most historically significant items were

switched off as auctioneers with Fred D. Pfenning Jr. making a couple of memorable cameos. Sandy Pfenning and Bob Parkinson were of great help as runners. Johann and Fred Dahlinger did a tremendous job keeping track of the bidding. This was the best auction ever as it offered the largest and finest array of material to go on the block by the

contracts for the Doll family of midgets and the Flying Zaccinis with Ringling-Barnum in the 1930s both of which were donated by John Lentz. When it was all over the CHS was exactly \$4254.00 richer. This figure easily broke the previous record of about \$2700.00 set at the 1986 Milwaukee meeting. Every penny of the auction proceeds will go to the *Bandwagon*.

The evening and the convention ended late that night as a handful of true addicts, including a number of Big Apple performers who came over after the evening performance, watched more films. About twenty obsessives were left when the projector bulb flickered its last.

The meeting was quite successful. It offered a full program with enough free time for members to enjoy the Vermont countryside and the many tourist attractions in the area. Many stated they enjoyed this convention more than any other. A total of 125 members and guests registered, a record for a meeting in the East. It was by far the most financially successful meeting as the auction cleared \$4254.00, and receipts exceeded expenses by a grand total of \$363.00, the latter figure testimony to blind luck in pricing the registration fee. The Burlington Econo Lodge, the Big Apple Circus and the Shelburne Museum were all very cooperative and were of great help in making the event enjoyable.

## MISCELLANEOUS CIRCUS SPECIAL

RBB&B-Ringling Bros. Barnum & Bailey

|   |      |
|---|------|
| Super Circus Comic Book, Vol. 1, No. 1, Jan. 1951.....  | 8.00 |
| Clyde Beatty or King Bros. Circus Red and Gold Pictorial Blotters (Christmas 1950s).....  | 5.00 |
| 1975, 1976, 1977 or 1978 Circus World Museum Calendars, Each with six different Schiltz Circus Pictures, 9 1/2 x 15 in. (each)..... | 5.00 |
| 1964 Paperback RBB&B Route Book or 1967 Hardback RBB&B Route Book (each).....   | 5.00 |
| 1951, 1952, 1953, 1954 Cardboard Press Working Passes, Set of Four.....   | 5.00 |
| 1948, 1949, 1951, 1952, 1953, 1954 RBB&B Season Passes, Cardboard Three for.....  | 5.00 |
| 1942-43, 51-52 and 55-56 Winterquarters Pass Cardboard Three for....  | 5.00 |
| 1951, 1953, 1954 RBB&B Christmas Cards Three for.....   | 5.00 |
| Six different RBB&B Letterheads.....  | 5.00 |
| 1957 RBB&B Program & Magazine (Mint).....   | 5.00 |
| Twenty Different RBB&B Tickets Mostly Complementary.....  | 5.00 |
| Twenty-five Misc. Circus Tickets (Other than RBB&B).....  | 5.00 |
| Send \$1.00 cash or stamps for list of circus items too numerous to list. Refundable on first purchas                               |      |

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# ONLY BIG SHOW COMING

Chapter 4 Part Two  
HOME ON THE RANGE

## Sells Brothers' Shows 1876-1880

By Orin C. King

**T**he *Commonwealth* reported on September 5, 1879 that "James Anderson of the Anderson show passed through Topeka, Wednesday (September 3). He reports all well with his show, and says he will surely be here this winter."

A paragraph in the *Ellis County Star*, Hays City, September 4, might reflect a reason for the withdrawal of James Anderson.

"The Sells Brothers' Great European 7 Elephant Show and Sells, Anderson & Co's Wagon (sic) Show goes into winter quarters at Topeka, October 15th. In 1880 all their great shows are to be combined and travel as one. Forty thousand dollars will be expended by them at Topeka during the winter in additions and repair."

The merger of the two shows may have been a sincere intent in September and October, but for unknown reasons the plan was not adopted, and in the spring of 1880 two separate shows moved out of Topeka.

"Earth's Only" Great European 7 Elephant Railroad Menagerie and Circus began the season of 1879 on Saturday, April 15, in Columbus, Ohio, where the show had spent the winter. The tour of 163 dates saw exhibitions in Ohio, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, New York, Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, Colorado, Wyoming, Nebraska and Kansas. The route stretched from Utica, New York, to Cheyenne, Wyoming with 21 stands in Kansas: August 22, Garnett; August 23, Independence; August 25, Humboldt; August 26, Burlington; August 27, Emporia; August 28, Junction City; August 29, Ellsworth; August 30, Hays City; September 8, Russell; September 9, Salina; September 10, Lindsborg; September 11, Minneapolis; September 12, Abilene; September 13, Wamego; Sep-

tember 15, Clay Center; September 16, Concordia; September 17, Cawker City; September 18, Beloit; September 19, Washington; September 22, Hiawatha; September 23, Seneca.

At least fourteen of the 7 Elephant towns had been played by Anderson & Company--Junction City, Ellsworth, Hays City, Russell, Salina, Minneapolis, Abilene, Wamego, Clay Center, Cawker City, Beloit, Washington,

gan; Shelbyville, Lafayette, and Crawfordsville, Indiana; Decatur, Danville and Springfield, Illinois; Louisville and Frankfort, Kentucky; Cincinnati, Ohio; none of which were on the route for 1879.

The same ad was used repeatedly in the Kansas press with minor rearrangement to satisfy the esthetic senses of the small town editors. Among the "actors" only Willis Cobb was named, but the aggregation claimed a payroll of \$10,000 per week.

The show came to Garnett, Friday, August 22, in "ITS OWN REGALLY ADORNED AND SNOW-WHITE ENAMELED DOUBLE SPECIAL TRAINS."

The menagerie occupied most of the newspaper advertising space, and featured the "7 ASIATIC AND AFRICAN ELEPHANTS 7 AND 5 PERFORMING BABY ELEPHANTS 5." Frequently the ad would carry an illustration showing "A PAIR OF NURSING TWIN BABY ELEPHANTS"--Tim and Flash drinking from bottles held by their keeper.

The *Daily Telegraph* of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania,

where the show did exhibit was quoted as saying "The seven elephants were there as advertised, one of them being elevated on the top of a huge Tableau Car."

"A \$22,000 TWO-HORNED BLACK HAIRY RHINOCEROS, THE ONLY ONE EVER IMPORTED," was prominently illustrated, and confirmed by a quote from the *Daily Post*, Louisville, Kentucky, where the show did not exhibit, that "The two-horned Rhinoceros is a tremendous brute, and both horns are well developed."

"The collection of living animals are the finest we ever saw," was the opinion of the *Daily Sun*, Decatur, Illinois, which did not see the show in 1879.

Possibly the quotes referred to other



This letterhead was used by the Sells brothers in 1878 and 1879. It lists Allen Sells, manager; Ephraim Sells, treasurer; Lewis Sells, director and Peter Sells, Jr., advertiser. The drawing of the brothers and their elephants was also used in their newspaper ads. Pfening Archives.

Hiawatha and Seneca. If there was a fifty cent piece in Kansas, the Sells brothers were determined to get it.

A staple of the 7 Elephant press department was a column of quotes from all over the western part of the nation. Needless to say the quotes, which were also used in advertisements, were laudatory. There were quotes from Adrian, East Saginaw, and Midland City, Michi-



seasons, but the implication was that the ads spoke of the current tour.

Among the "onlys" the show claimed were "The only Arctic Aquarium and only Audubon Aviary, The only Metropolitan Museum of Human Living Miracles." Other astounding creatures were "the only living horned horse of Ethiopia," and "Sahara fleet of twelve camels and dromedaries."

The Sells brothers modestly stated that their enterprise was "At once the Most Enormous, Elegant and refined exhibition ever shown in America."

"Admission to all, 50 Cents. Children under the age of nine years, twenty-five cents."

After the show had come and gone the *Garnett Weekly Journal*, August 30, reported "Sells menagerie and circus which exhibited in this city, Friday of last week, drew an immense crowd. There were certainly not less than 3,000 people under the canvas in the afternoon, and a very large audience at night. The street parade and general performance and exhibition of animals came as near filling the advertised bill as any show that has ever struck us in the last five years."

The *Burlington Independent*, August 29, reviewing the exhibitions of Tuesday, August 26, remarked on the chastity of the female performers:

"The Sells Bros. have come and gone, and left behind them the highest reputation of any circus that has ever been in the town. There were no gamblers with them. There were no disgustingly bold, bad women. There was no meanness on the part of the management. The circus performance, barring the pad riding, was the best we have ever seen. They come nearer abolishing the indecent posturing of women on horseback than any other show on the road. There were more new features and fewer old ones than usual. Their clowns were the best that we have ever seen. On the whole, Burlington likes the Sells Brothers."

The 7 Elephant Railroad show received favorable reports nearly everywhere it played, but Emporia, August 27, evoked a commendation from the *Daily News* that was overlooked elsewhere:

"One excellent feature of the business management was that when the circus arrived its gentlemanly press agent, Mr. Cobb, called at the newspaper offices, and all other places where bills had been incurred, and audited and cashed all claims, and gave out what tickets were due, and thus enable the parties entitled to complimentaries to use them without waiting until the

The Sells are princes in their way.—*Louisville Courier Journal*.

**EARTH'S ONLY 7 ELEPHANT,**

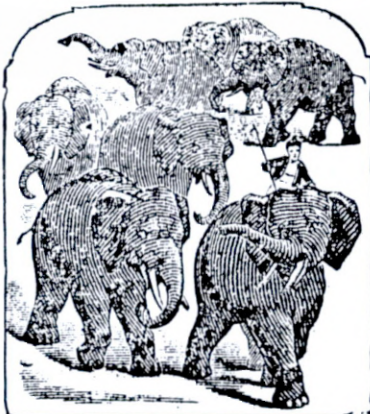
**Railroad Menagerie and Circus**

IN ALL ITS

**Overwhelming and Undivided Vastness and Variety.**

AND

**On its Own Sumptuous and Pictorial Double Special Palace Trains.**



Will erect its Mammoth, Moving Metropolis of Marvels at

**MORROW**

**Friday July 11th.**

**JUDGE US ONLY BY WHAT OTHERS SAY OF US.**

**A Stupendous Separate Menagerie.**

The collection of animals is the finest we ever saw.—*Decatur (Ill.) Daily Sun*.

The two-horned Rhinoceros is a tremendous brute, and both horns are well developed.—*Louisville (Ky.) Daily Post*.

The 7 elephants were beauties and the admiration of all beholders.—*Fort Wayne (Ind.) Daily Gazette*.

**"Incomparably the Finest Circus."**

The world's aladdin arena of new and famous faces.

Every land in Equestrian and Athletic contribution to classical perfect.

**A \$10,000 PER WEEK ARENIZ EXHIBITION, Without A Parallel in Any Age.**

Incomparably the finest circus entertainment ever given this neighborhood.—*Sharon (Pa.) Herald*.

The Bareback riding was brilliantly artistic.—*Pittsburg Daily Commercial*.

The veteran Sam Rinehart performed the almost incredible feat of turning a somersault over five elephants and eight camels.—*Springfield (Ill.) Daily State Register*.

**'The Hugo Highway Free Festival of Four Famous Managers.**

**THE MOST MAGNIFICENT PAGEANT OF THE AGE, And absolutely Free to All.**

The street parade in the morning was the best ever witnessed here.—*Oil City (Pa.) Daily Derrick*.

Newspaper ad used by the Seven Elephant Circus during the 1879 season. The Sells name is listed in very small print at top. Pfening Archives.

performance was half over. This is a feature we recommend to all other circuses--Sells Brothers being the first to adopt it. On the whole, we recommend

the 7-elephant show as well worthy of patronage, and advise our readers to see it whenever it comes their way."

From Emporia the show moved to Junction City over a branch of the Katy railroad which has since been abandoned and the rails taken up. The advertising car arrived on the 13th and left for Ellsworth the following evening. The exhibition of August 28, was announced on a billboard 200 feet long erected on the northeast corner of the park in the heart of Junction City. The advance was directed by Charles Stowe, general agent, who placed a full page ad for two insertions in the *Junction City Union*, and on show day called again on the newspaper with a printing order for the Union Printing Works. In return the paper found Stowe to be "a thorough newspaper man, consequently is a good showman, a splendid business man and a genial first-class gentleman, such as the Sells Bros. always have associated with them."

Kansas in August can surpass both Hell and Texas, and in 1879, the month was brutally hot. "The weather has been very hot for the last two weeks," according to the *Union*, August 30. "Each day for a week past mercury in the thermometer has reached 100 degrees. Rain is needed very much."

In another column the *Union* praised the show: "The animals all look sleek and fat, and the rhinoceros disports two horns, as advertised. The ring performance is splendid. There is nothing common place or tedious about it. Everything is put through on the jump. Before one performance is fairly closed another is commenced."

Chivalry was alive and well in Junction City, as reported by the *Union*, September 6. "A 'smart Alick' boor at the circus last week got his ear pulled and his face slapped by Marshal Cullinan, for using profane and indecent language in the presence of ladies. Served him right."

Charles Stowe, working in advance of the show, called on the editor of the *Ellsworth Reporter* who remembered Stowe from his days with Barnum. The editor made an inspection of the advertising car and reported, August 21, that, "Their advertising car is a novelty in itself. The advance agents numbering about a dozen, all dressed in uniform, have sleeping berths in the car, a desk for writing, also an engine for cooking paste, besides the piles of bills, cuts and other conveniences for making things perfect."

The description of the car could fit nearly any railroad show advance car, but the crew, "all dressed in uniform," deserves to be noted.



During the parade at Ellsworth, August 29, clown Ben Dodge was thrown from his trick mule and "badly damaged, so far as the loss of skin and lame from several bunches caused from too immediate an attack with ground antics." The *Reporter* was "sorry Dodge felt so sore for he really is a good clown and the audience was not entertained by him as his natural wit and clear spoken jokes would indicate he had the ability to perform."

The *Reporter* found the 7 Elephant to be a "model show." The parade was "of gorgeous grandness. The banks and calliope enlivened the ear of lovers of good music."

"The tumbling, leaping, riding and daring feats on the trapeze, were wonderful acts of professional skill. The clowns were good. One feature, however, deserves particular mention, that is the performing dogs, monkeys and goats; it was the most laughable and entertaining part of the show, and being a new feature, was much appreciated. We hope they will come this way next season."

Western Kansas in 1879 was sparsely populated, Hays City claiming 949 persons, yet according to the laconic report of the *Ellis County Star*, "the circus was well attended" for its exhibitions, August 30, on a rainy Saturday. The *Star* remarked, September 4, that "Not a cuss word or harsh, foul expression was heard to fall from the lips of an employee of the Sells Brothers' Great European Seven Elephant Show whilst here, and we know they had a time that tried men's soles—especially the lemonade vendors." The paper gave no hint concerning difficulties, except to mention the rain.

The *Star* was impressed with the good behavior of the circus men, and, in another column, commented, "Sobriety and good morals prevailed Circus day—Sells Brothers' men setting the example."

Following the stand at Hays the show made a Sunday run on the Kansas Pacific to Denver, 350 miles. Two days in Denver, September 1 and 2, were followed by Boulder, Cheyenne, Ft. Collins, and, on September 6, exhibitions at Golden. Another Sunday run of 389 miles brought the Great 7 Elephant to Russell, Kansas, for the exhibitions of September 8.

Nothing notable occurred in Russell. The *Independent* limited its comments to the seven widely separated sentences shown below:

"The circus drew a great crowd on Monday last."

"Over 1,500 people visited the show during the afternoon and evening."

"The performances were good, and all, young and old, appeared well satisfied." "The collection of animals was large, and eminently worthy of the attention of the Public."

We will simply state that the performance was all that was advertised.

FORRIDABLE FACTS TO BET ON:

**SELLS BROTHERS'**

MILLIONAIRE CONFEDERATION OF STUPENDOUS RAIL ROAD SHOWS.

WILL POSITIVELY EXHIBIT AT

**KEWANEES**

**Saturday, July 31.**

**IT IS A \$2,000,000 FACT!**

It is the one Grandest, Greatest, Costliest, Most Complete, Most Moral and Infinitely the BEST Wild Beast, Aerial, Oceanic, and Savage Life Illustrating Canvas Collection of this age of Gigantic Corporations.

**IT IS A \$200,000 FACT,** It actually possesses and presents each day in parade.

**The Mightiest Herd of ELEPHANTS ever exported from Asia and Africa combined.**

**IT IS A \$307,000 FACT**

**Male Hippopotamus.**

**FREE ONLY STUPENDOUS**

**AND THE ONLY**

**FULL-GROWN FEMALE HIPPOPOTAMUS.**

**THE BEST FOR IS COMING APPROACHING**

**near Hays, Kansas, and an African**

**will be placed on exhibition, and an African**

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**The only Herd of Six Performing Colorado Cattle,**

Whose simultaneous and incredible feats dwarf to insignificance the common tricks of all so-called "Trained Stallions."

**A TRIBE OF GENUINE UTE CHIEFS AND BRAVES, A Separate Stupendous Electric-Lighted Classic Circus**

**IT IS A \$300,000 FACT**

**WILLIS COBB'S MINIATURE CIRCUS**

**IT IS A \$40,000 FACT**

**THE GREAT PERFECTED ELECTRIC LIGHT AND MOTOR**

**IT IS A \$100,000 FACT**

**THE GREAT PERFECTED ELECTRIC LIGHT AND MOTOR**

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**IT IS A \$100,000 FACT**

**THE GREAT PERFECTED ELECTRIC LIGHT AND MOTOR**

thing the advertising promised—"a rare occurrence with shows."

In spite of the rain on show day, September 11, Minneapolis provided "large crowds." The *Independent*, September 20, reported that "Sells Bros." show had one of the trick mules stray off on the night they were here. L. Epsteam, Detective for the show, remained here that night, and found the mule next afternoon, about six miles south of town, in the bluffs. He started for Abilene 7 o'clock Friday evening, and got there at 1 a.m. Saturday, when the show was ready to pull out for the next town."

The only comment in the Abilene press for the exhibitions of September 12, was in the *Gazette*, September 19, stating that, "Willis Cobb, with Sells Bros. splendid circus has the best trick dogs in the world, and their performances delighted everybody. Cobb and his little family are simply immense, and worth going miles to see. We never saw anything equal to them."

The *Wamego Tribune* totally ignored the performances given September 13, but at the next stand Clay Center, September 15, the *Clay County Dispatch* fairly bubbled with circus news.

When the advance crew arrived in Clay Center is unknown, but the *Dispatch*, being wide awake, made a deal with the agent in charge who "has kindly given us authority to issue a programme of the afternoon's entertainment, to be distributed on the street and in the tent. It will be neatly printed in newspaper form, containing interesting reading matter and a limited number of advertisements. Merchants and others who wish space are requested to hand in their favors this week. The circulation will be 3000."

After the show had come and gone, the *Dispatch* noted that, "Those that were in a hurry for their circus tickets last Monday bought of a duly authorized peddler, and paid 10 cents extra."

The *Dispatch*, in reviewing the show, September 18, was lavish in its praise:

"On Monday last our city was visited by one of the most wonderfully attractive aggregations ever shown beneath a canvass. It is not often that such an array of talent is gathered together, but it is a fact that Sells Bros. 7 Elephant Railroad Show is a model of perfection. Exhibiting, as it does, more than it ad-



vertises, it cannot help but be appreciated wherever it may erect its canvass. The ring performance was first-class, the animals very fine, and the management perfect."

Al Townsend probably did not recognize the perfection discovered by the editor, his opinion being prejudiced by the following event related by the *Dispatch*.

"Three men, employees of the circus, got left in town last Tuesday. They succeeded in hiring Ed Pearson's team to take them to Clifton. Pearson was paid for the use of the team before starting, and Al Townsend was employed to drive, with a promise of pay. Arriving at Clifton, the circus men asked Al where he was going to stop. He said 'over to the Commercial Hotel.' All right," said the boys, 'we will be over there in a minute.' A few minutes have passed away, and Al is still waiting."

Of great interest to a breathless world was the announcement in the *Dispatch* that, "Chris Dunable hauled the water for the circus."

The *Concordia Blade*, in advance of the exhibition of Tuesday, September 16, ran the handout consisting of a series of "quotes" from other papers, and also a story in a mock Biblical style.

"The circus hath come upon us even as the rains descend hath it descended upon us, and even as the floods come, cometh it encampeth around about us from Jericho even unto Jerusalem.

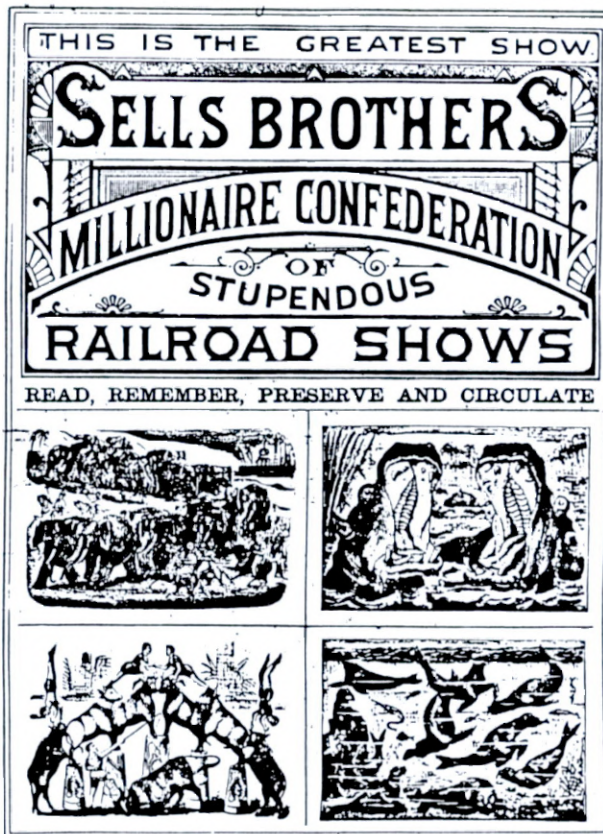
"There do come also with it the man that tinkleth the cymbal, and the drums that do beat, and the behemoth that maketh himself to blow in the waters, and the woman that disporteth upon the wild horse. There become also the peanut that vexeth by day and the lemonade that provoketh by night, and there be come also the calliope that travaileth by steam and doth prevail against us sore.

"Why do the heathen rage, and why do the people make their ears to be stopped with their fingers, the calliope is an offense unto the son of man and a calamity unto the handmaidens. There be a handwriting upon the wall and they that read know whereof it speaks, it is the handwriting of the circus and the manifold wonders thereof, and the people are pleased as to their souls.

"The tents are pitched in the innermost parts of the city and there is a sound as of music and dancing therein, and woman rideth around the ring and the lion maketh a devouring noise. The foolish boy goeth unto his father and saith to him, father, give unto me wherewith I may enter in unto the circus.

"And the father laugheth him unto scorn and chasteneth him with his slipper, and there is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth.

"But the wise boy goeth unto his father and saith, father, give unto me, I beseech thee, wherewith I may give unto the heathen which do be sore oppressed in Zululand. The father giveth of his fullness, yea, even unto the wise boy giveth he of silver, finer even than gold, yea than of much fine gold, sweeter also than honey in the honeycomb. "And the wise boy taketh the pieces of silver and crawlth under the tents of the ungodly and there



This sixteen page courier was used by the Sells Bros. Circus in 1880. Pfening Archives.

abideth, and he expendeth the silver in peanuts and lemonade and riotous living.

"But he seeth the circus all the same and he heareth the sound thereof and he rejoiceth much in the glories that appertain thereunto."

In 1879 every reporter imagined himself another Mark Twain.

The *Blade* contradicted itself in reporting grift on the show:

"Like all other 'good things,' the big show (last Tuesday) had its 'crooked paths.' Two men stationed just inside the entrance to the big tent, were busy

'taking in' the unsophisticated by selling them books which would give them a seat in the circus. The price was 10 cents, and many paid the bill to get rid of the 'loud talkers.' This was the only fraud we heard of practised by the big show."

The contradiction appeared in another column which stated, without further elucidation, that, "Fortune wheels, etc., were plenty on circus day."

Charles Stowe, working in advance of the show, had a substantial budget for newspaper advertising, but money could not always secure the full page the show desired.

"In justice to the troupe," explained the *Cawker City Free Press*, September 4, "we would state that Mr. Stowe wanted a whole page advertisement in our paper instead of the two-column one which we present, but we had not the space, and would not infringe on our advertising patrons, and hence this apology."

A "mammoth billboard with circus posters" which proved to be "the wonder and astonishment of every youngster on the streets" blew down during a heavy wind on the 12th but was raised again the following day.

The *Cawker City* exhibitions, September 17, like the show's appearance in every other Kansas town, drew an immense

crowd.

The *Free Press* reported that, "The largest crowd that has ever been in Cawker City, was in town yesterday. The streets were jammed from one corner to the other, and all the backyards and vacant lots, and also both sides of the streets were lined with teams. The Sells Bros. have reason to be pleased at their visit to this place."

The circus "was a complete success, and gave entire satisfaction. The performance was excellent, and the riding was first class."

At Beloit, September 18, the *Gazette* commented that, "Well, the circus is over and all is quiet. The circus was all it was advertised to be, and no person







By April 3, it was no secret that Sells Brothers' Millionaire Confederation of Stupendous Railroad Shows

Newspaper ads appeared in all Topeka papers on April 8. Featured was James Robinson, "Bareback Equestrian Emperor of the Universe; engaged at a salary of \$1,000 per week." Robinson may or may not have received \$1,000 per week, but there were no doubts concerning his riding abilities. In an age when horses and horsemen were greatly ad-

"100 Laureled Heroes of the Ring" appeared in the "New World's Challenge Circus," including bareback riders, beautiful equestriennes, phenomenal



THE NEW GOLIATH!

## Welsh & Sands'

Great New Orleans and San Francisco  
Railroad Circus and Royal  
English Menagerie.

Transported on its Own Special Monster  
Palace Trains. Will Erect its Electric Light-  
ed Millioaire Metropolis of Transcendent  
Marvels at

Leavenworth, Tuesday, April 13



The Only Absolutely New Show of  
the Season:

Everything Fresh, Grand, Bright, Novel  
and Attractive. And all exhibited in the  
Chained Lightning! Sun-surpassing Blaze of

The Only Genuine Great Electric Light  
Illuminating the sky like Moscow's Con-  
flagration, Costing \$30,000. Requiring a 60  
Horse-power Engine, a 4 Horse-power Bol-  
ler and many miles of cable copper wires. It  
is Exhibited both afternoon and evening.  
And is alone the Greatest Show on Earth.

Behold a \$100,000 Herd of Elephants  
IN MASTODONIC MARCH.

See the Huge Mass of Ivory-army Flock.  
An Elephant as large as any other three.  
In Midget Contrast then Amazed Inspect  
THE TINIEST ELEPHANT IN ALL THE  
WORLD.

A STUPENDOUS

Six Continent Wild Beast Confederation  
More, Freer and Finer Animal Excite-  
tion than were ever canopied before. A Real  
Arolic Aquarium at Last.

The Largest Pair of Sea Lions Ever  
Captured.

A Two-ton Pair of Living Ice Sea Marvels  
In a Grand Separate Electric-lit Arena but  
without Extra Charge.

The New World's Challenge Circus

This newspaper ad was used by  
Welsh and Sands early in the 1880  
season. The cost of admission was  
listed as 50 cents. Kansas Historical  
Society collection.

athletes, thrilling acrobats, convulsing  
clowns and great general performers.

"The only Genuine Japanese Circus,  
the Renowned 7 Russian Brother Ath-  
letes. The Great French Family De  
Lave, a Company of Genuine Egyptian  
Jugglers. For the first time a Hindoo  
Company of Snake Charmers and Mys-  
terious Wizards."

The ad proclaimed that, "On Each  
Morning of Illustrious Exhibition a  
FREE SHOW WORTH A DAY'S JOUR-  
NEY to see an Avalanche of Splendor  
in the Streets. Enlivened by the Music

of Three Bands. And the far-reaching  
and sonorous notes of The Great Chari-  
ot Steam Band."

After the show had come and gone,  
the *Times* published a favorable review:  
"Yesterday, Welsh and Sand's circus  
made its first appearance of the season,  
in this city. The heavy gale which was  
blowing during the forenoon caused  
considerable trouble in getting the  
tents erected, which caused some delay  
in the street parade. The latter was a  
magnificent affair, filling the streets  
many squares. The bands were far  
enough apart to prevent confusion in  
the music, which throughout was excel-  
lent. There are few shows traveling that  
have three bands engaged for a street  
procession. The mammoth tents, all  
new, at the corner of Delaware St. and  
Broadway were crowded during the after-  
noon and evening with spectators who  
witnessed a better circus performance  
than has been given in this city for  
years. The general talent of the com-  
pany is good; features that were remem-  
bered were the fine riding of Mr. O.  
Gorman and Mr. James Robinson, the  
champion bareback rider of the world.  
Sam Rienhart's trained dogs and a spe-  
cialty which drew forth much admira-  
tion. The herd of nine elephants, nu-  
merous camels, sea-lions, and a great  
array of other animals foreign to our  
clime, made the menagerie a most en-  
tertaining one. The concerts and side  
shows are worth the price of admission  
charged. Mr. Welsh, who personally su-  
perintends everything connected with  
the company, is a practical man and a  
most genial gentleman."

The Leavenworth stand was a circus  
day satisfactory to everyone, despite a  
couple of vexations reported by the  
*Times*. During the tear down a torch set  
fire to a "side show" tent which was  
"damaged considerably."

In a separate column the paper report-  
ed that, "The monkey wagon of Welsh  
& Sands' circus company was over-  
turned near the circus grounds, night  
before last. Several parties who thought  
the cage contained lions made haste to  
get out of the way."

The exhibitions at Atchison, April  
14, were favorably reported by the *Daily  
Champion*:

"The Welsh & Sands Circus made its  
second stand of the season in Atchison  
yesterday, having had a profitable day  
at Leavenworth on Tuesday. In spite of  
the tremendous gale that prevailed in  
the morning, and which at one time  
seemed to make it impossible to spread  
their canvass at all, the tents were  
erected, and the street parade began  
about noon. An expectant crowd lined

THIS IS THE GREATEST SHOW.

SELLS BROTHERS'

MILLIONAIRE CONFEDERATION

Of Stupendous Railroad Shows.



Will positively exhibit at

Topeka,

Tuesday, April 20th.

IT HAS MANY TIMES THE LARGEST

AND

MOST COMPLETE MENAGERIE:

Infinitely the Greatest, Grandest, and Most Classic  
Circus; the Most Gorgeous \$300,000 Free Pro-  
cession of Sensational Surprises, including

A \$200,000 HERD OF ELEPHANTS

The Great and Only

James Robinson

Bareback Equestrian Emperor of the Universe; en-  
gaged at a salary of \$1,000 per week, and who rides  
at 3 and 9 p. m.

The Only \$57,000 Full-grown Pair of  
Living Hippopotami,

The Only \$50,000 Twenty Sea Lion, Polar Elephant,  
Amphibious Leopard and Siberian Seal  
Aquarium;

The Only \$18,000 Drove of Six Performing Col-  
orado Cattle;

The Only \$25,000 Two-Horned Hairy Rhinoceros; the  
Only Delegation of the Chiefs and Braves, who ap-  
pear at each performance in a most wild and thrill-  
ing equestrian drama, expressly arranged for them,  
and graphically illustrating the savage onslaughts  
and single combats of border warfare;

The Only King Earle's Royal Japanese Circus; the  
Only \$25,000 Willis Cobb's Miniature Circus; the Only  
Genuine 60 Horse-power Electric Light and Motor, ex-  
hibited both afternoon and evening; the Only Show  
that has all and everything it advertises—such being  
the united verdict of the press.

The Only Show that has no "Candy Butchers," and  
peanut and lemonade peddlers, and does not permit  
its patrons to be imposed upon or importuned.

Far the Cheapest Show in all the World. One  
Ticket for the Usual Price admitting to all.  
Children under 9 years, half-price.

A note at the bottom of this 1880  
Sells ad states: "The only show that  
has no 'Candy Butchers,' and peanut  
and lemonade peddlers." Kansas His-  
torical Society collection.

the streets along the route for hours be-  
fore the procession started. The caval-  
cade, which we consider one of the  
most important features of the circus,  
was creditable in appearance, and the  
nine elephants, as advertised, formed a  
prominent part.

"We believe no show ever paraded so



many elephants in this city before. People of all sizes, nationalities and colors were on hand to admire and the boys were out in full force, but, unable to fix their attention on so many elephants, at once clung close to the heels of the bounding steed, ridden by Sam Rinehart the fat clown, ever and anon making the welkin ring with cheers for that great and good man. The afternoon performance was largely attended, and the big canvass was fairly packed at night with hundreds sitting on the ground. The performance was first-class. James Robinson, of course, needs no praise. He is still what he has been for many years, the peerless rider of the world. Polly Lee is a very fine equestrienne and light balancer, and Gorman is a dashing rider, one of the best we ever saw; in fact, all the performers were up in their business. One comfort connected with the show was there was no dirt. The canvass is perfectly new, and everything was bright and clean. Then the music was good. George Dixon, the well known leader, directs the magnificent band, and Prof. Benjamin, a fine musician from this city, is leader of the orchestra.

"The Welsh & Sands combination is the property of the Sells Brothers, who may be claimed as Kansas men, regularly passing their winters in this State, and now pecuniarily interested in the new opera house project in Topeka. Mr. Lewis Sells will travel with the 'Welsh & Sands,' and we commend him to all as a gentleman. The newspaper people will also be pleased with Mr. Allison, the gentlemanly press agent."

The show jumped to Missouri following Atchison and played St. Joseph, April 15; Lathrop, April 16; Hamilton, April 17; and Chillicothe, Monday, April 19.

On the 17th the *Champion* had more news on the show. "The Welsh & Sands show appears to have been somewhat shorn of its fair proportions after leaving Atchison and St. Joseph. James Robinson, Polly Lee and seven elephants passed through here yesterday on their way to join the principal outfit at Topeka, known as the 'Sells Brothers' show."

Meanwhile, back in Topeka, at the request of the Sells brothers, the city fathers granted permission for the Millionaire Confederation to exhibit on Tuesday, April 20, free of any license charge.

Advance tickets could be purchased on the 19th and 20th at T. J. Kellam's Postoffice news stand, the Tefft House and Rowely Bros. Drug Store and in North Topeka at the Palace Hotel.

## **The New Goliath!**

**WELSH & SANDS'**

**Great New Orleans and San Francisco Railroad Circus and Royal English Menagerie.**

**ATCHISON,**

**Wednesday, April 14, 1880.**

**The Only Absolutely New Show of the Season.**

**EVERYTHING FRESH, GRAND, BRIGHT, NOVEL AND ATTRACTIVE.**

**And all exhibited in the Chained Lightning's Munkurpussing Blaze of**

**The Only Genuine Great Electric Light, COSTING \$30,000.**

**Reho'd**

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**An Elephant as Large as Any Other Three.**

**In Midget Contrast then Amazed Inspect**

**The Tiniest Elephant in all the World.**

**A Stupendous Six Continent**

**WILD BEAST CONFEDERATION.**

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**THE LARGEST PAIR OF SEA LIONS EVER CAPTURED.**

**A TWO-TON PAIR OF LIVING ICE SEA MARVELS**

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**A Colossal Caravan of Educated Beasts.**

**Including Ponderous Performing Elephants, Superb Trick Horses, Midget Ponies, Equine Dogs, Ape Actors, Gymnastic Goats and Motley Monkeys.**

**On Each Morning of Illustrious Exhibition**

**A Free Show**

**WORTH A DAY'S JOURNEY TO SEE!**

**AN AVALANCHE OF SPLENDOR IN THE STREETS.**

**Enlivened by the Music of Three Bands.**

**And the Far-reaching and Honorous Notes of the**

**GREAT CHARIOT STEAM BAND.**

A newspaper reader would have difficulty finding this unillustrated ad used by Welsh and Sands for the April 14, 1880 date in Atchison, Kansas. Kansas Historical Society collection.

On show day thousands of people greeted the parade as it moved north on Kansas Avenue from Tenth to Second Street, returning via Quincy Street, to the show grounds on Tenth Street near Quincy. Leading the procession was the show's finest bandwagon drawn by eight caparisoned horses. Twenty-six cages followed the riders, in one of which sat Squire Bosworth, known on the show as "Animal Tom," with three or four lions for companions. The new

dens of the hippopotomi and sea lions were favorites with the crowd. Mixed in among the cages were nine elephants, as many camels, three clowns, and a host of painted Indians. About the middle of the procession was the Tally-ho coach carrying on top a fine band of black musicians. The parade displayed 125 horses. At the end was the steam calliope boasting of "The Girl I Left Behind Me." The artist playing the calliope was J. Lambert Ingersoll, once a prominent member of the New York bar. The parade was admired by all as one of the best ever seen in Topeka, the only complaint being the dust that rose in great clouds from the dirt of Kansas Avenue.

The evening performance drew a crowd of unprecedented size. A half dozen of the towns young blades started for the show grounds from Swift & Holiday's drug store, 523 Kansas, and by the time they reached the Tefft House at Seventh Street their number was doubled, and when Eighth Street was reached their number was about forty. "They then in single file," reported the *Capital*, "with 1st sergeant of the Capital Guards leading, marched to the show grounds and mingled with the vast and restless crowd."

The crowd on the lot was so huge that tragedy from severe crowding and pushing was narrowly averted. Long after the ticket wagons were closed, the crowd still demanded admittance. Inside the tent every seat was occupied, people were seated on the ground, and others were standing wherever room enough was found for two feet. It was a showman's nightmare--a ticket wagon full of money and a tent full of impending disaster. Fortunately, nothing dire happened.

The performance was warmly received. Every Kansan had had some experience with bovine stupidity and marvelled at the simple tricks Willis Cobb had managed to teach General Grant, General Sherman, General Gilpatrick, General Custer, General Butler and President Hayes, his six trained Colorado cattle.

Willie Sells received many compliments for his riding. In reviewing the show April 21, the *Capital* reported, "Little Willie Sells in his bareback riding and Wm. Gorman in his hurricane hurdle acts, Miss Pauline Lee as the lady equestrian, and lastly the thrilling bareback riding of James Robinson--these performances one and all are wonderful in their daring, their success. To see James Robinson ride, almost in the air, is to see the greatest rider in the world today--one who does the most



difficult feats with an ease and grace seemingly superhuman."

There was displeasure at City Hall. The city council received only 50 of the 119 free tickets the members requested.

The Millionaire Confederation of Stupendous Railroad Shows moved on and by summer, according to the *Commonwealth*, July 7, was clearing a profit of more than \$1,000 per day.

In Kansas City, the day after the Topeka opening, a teamster with the show suffered a severe injury. William King, a resident of Topeka's Fourth Ward, was driving a six horse hitch when the swing team's chain harness became loosened while going down a steep hill and the horses began to run. In an act of great skill and tremendous courage King caused the wheel horses to fall and stop the wagon with their bodies. King was thrown from the seat and seriously injured.

Kansas City in April was a losing date for the show due to a severe windstorm which in the words of the *Commonwealth* "prevented them from making anything like a show." The Millionaire Confederation returned to Kansas City for exhibitions of July 7, playing the city one day ahead of W. W. Cole. Following Kansas City the show played Paola, Thursday, July 8.

In later years several shows associated with Willie Sells wintered in Topeka, but the winter of 1879-80 was the last time the huge Sells brothers' shows ever recouped and refitted in Topeka. Stories still circulate in Topeka concerning the days when Sells-Floto headquartered here--but there is not a word of truth in the tales. Sells-Floto never spent a winter in Shawnee County and never maintained a headquarters in Topeka.

The Millionaire Confederation spent a considerable sum in Topeka during the winter of 1879-80, but more important were the investment opportunities observed by Allen, Lewis and Peter. Allen, especially, was attracted to Topeka for he was becoming weary of the itinerant showman's life and in 1883 when he sold out to his brothers for \$40,000, he came to Topeka and purchased a home at 715 Quincy Street. The rest of his life was spent in Topeka.

A 10,000 mile route took the aggre-

gation into Kansas, Missouri, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Dakota Territory, Iowa, Kentucky, Tennessee, Georgia, Alabama and Mississippi; and at the end of a highly successful season the show went into winter quarters at Columbus, Ohio, which henceforth was the permanent headquarters of the Sells brothers.

In April as the show was preparing to vacate the fair grounds at Topeka some damage was done to the grounds which according to the agreement with the county commissioners had to be restored by the show. Before the damage could be repaired, a commissioner demanded immediate action in an insulting manner and Peter Sells paid the \$25 demanded, but swore never again to winter in Topeka. The county collected the \$25 damages, but lost at least \$20,000 per year in circus expenditures.

Research funded by grants from: Wolfe's Camera Shops, Inc., Topeka, Kansas and First National Bank of Kansas, Topeka.



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# PICTORIAL CIRCUS BLOTTERS

A rather unusual type of collectable circusiana are colorful blotters issued by shows for advertising or as Christmas greetings.

The Sells-Floto blotter was used in 1930. It was printed in full color. Buster Cronin used a blotter around 1932 to advertise the Al G. Barnes Circus equipment for rental use at motion picture studios.

Karla Knecht used the Barnes-Sells-Floto blotter with her photo as a calling card during the 1937 season.

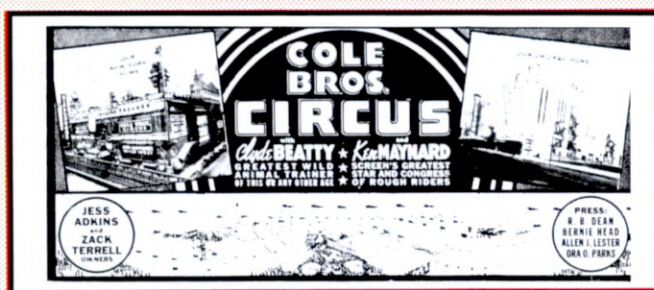
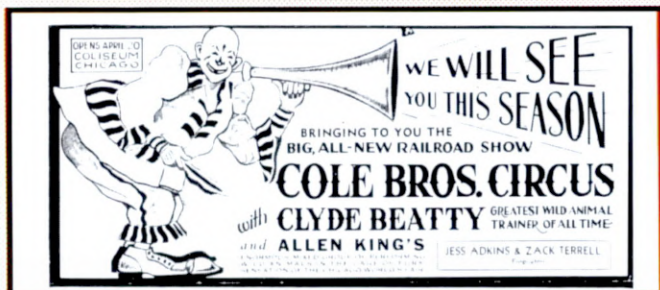
In the middle 1930s Art Miller, general agent of the Seils-Sterling Circus used this blotter as a calling card.

Perhaps the greatest advocate of blotter use was Floyd King. He produced the two Cole Bros.-Clyde Beatty Circus blotters shown here. The one with a

clown was used in 1935 and the one showing the buildings was used in 1937. King also produced the Robbins blotter for used in 1938.

King used the Roland Butler drawing for King-Cristiani in 1951. He also used blotters for the Clyde Beatty and Beatty-Cole Circus in the late 1950s.

All blotters shown here are from the Pfening Archives.





# THE RINGLING Egypt Float

By Stuart Thayer

In the winter of 1902-03, the Ringling brothers bolstered their street parade by the construction of new wagons. This may well have been because of their knowledge that Barnum & Bailey, just returned from Europe, was planning a dramatic increase in parade vehicles, the well-known Sebastian production of that same winter.

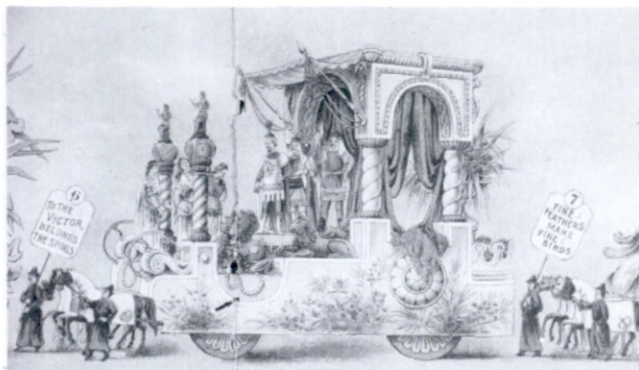
Among the wagons ordered by the Baraboo concern were a rhinoceros cage (#66); a hippopotamus den (#42, the same number as the cage it replaced); the so-called Paradise cage (#63) and a lion cage (#76, later on RBBB and now rebuilt at the Circus World Museum); the four nation tableaus (United States, Germany, Russia and Great Britain); a snake den; and an organ wagon. In addition, five "nation" floats were constructed, named Persia, Egypt, France, India and Spain. These were essentially flat bed wagons, about fifteen feet long, on which a housing and accessories loosely evocative of the named country were placed. In parade, costumed personnel were distributed on each of these, excepting the France. The wagons were designed and the carvings made by Milwaukee Ornamental Carving Co., then at 423 Poplar Street

Poster from 1902 Mardi-gras which inspired the Ringling Egypt float. Prototype for Egypt is second from left, second row. Thayer collection.

in what is now termed South Milwaukee, and built by Moeller brothers of Baraboo.

Someone, perhaps a Ringling, who had visited the Mardi-gras in New Orleans in February, 1902, acquired an advertising poster. This item, a one sheet with a great many small advertisements on the back (La-Mothe's Oyster Saloon, White Rabbitt Laundry Starch, Hotel Grunewald, Union National Bank, etc., etc.) illustrates the floats in the Mardi-gras parade. One of the pictures was torn from the poster and sent to Milwaukee Ornamental Carving with the suggestion that it might serve as a pattern for one of the floats. Under the title "To the Victor Belongs the Spoils" the float shows captured plunder, including three comely ladies, under the guardianship of three soldiers with swords and bucklers. The theme of the parade was "Quotes from Literature," and, of course, our subject float carried one from a speech in the U. S. Senate by W. L. Marcey. How this qualifies as literature we leave to others.

The carving company accepted the suggestion and the result first appeared in the 1903 parade. On January 26,

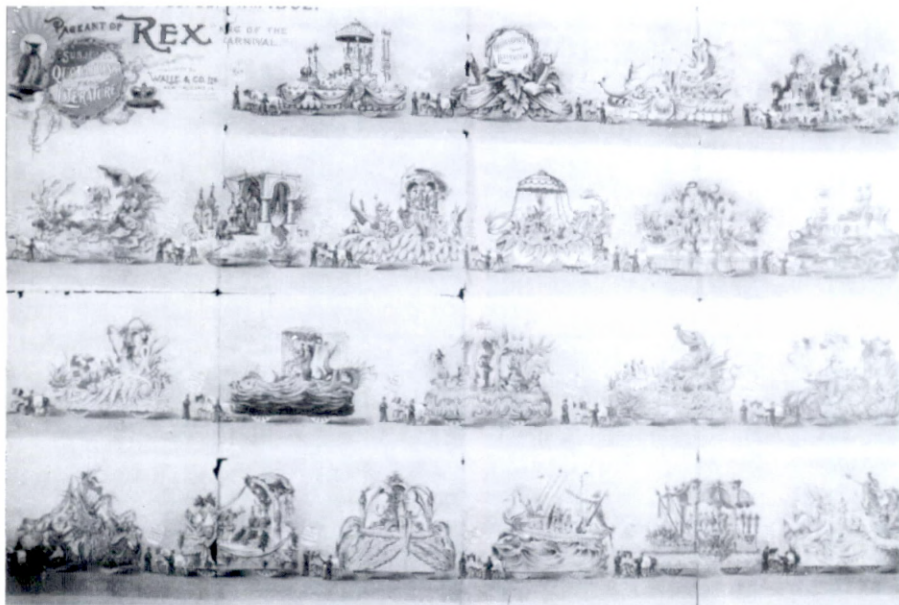


Blow-up of Mardi-gras poster showing "To the Victor Belongs the Spoils" float. The Ringling show sent this poster fragment to the Milwaukee Ornamental Carving Co. as a starting point to design the Egypt float.

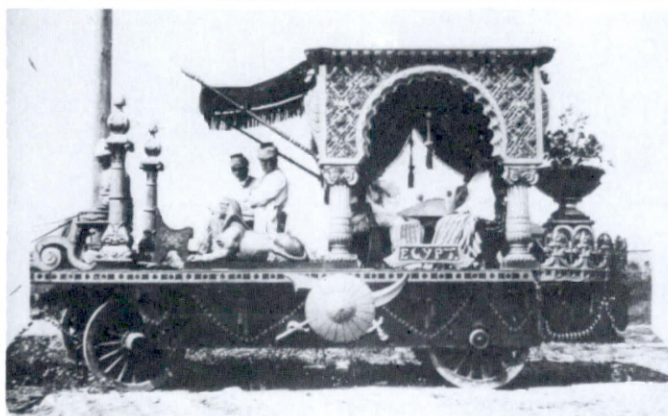
1903, the Ringlings were advised by the carving company what the floats represented. Of the Egypt they said:

"The idea in the Egypt is to show a harem and on the inside of the building you have to put four feminine persons in Egyptian costumes. On the step you will notice on first platform in center [a] eunuch who is lying with sword or some other weapon who is watching the harem. On railing in front of wagon are [sitting] two men in position of Turks. If you intend to put more persons on the wagon you will find room in the end of the wagon, right and left of railing, at which will be slaves. You will notice on [the drawing which accompanied the letter] in center of wagon a Tabourette [on which] is a checker board. The idea was to have the ladies sitting on the floor and playing checkers and smoking a chibouk. The floor must be covered with carpets, rugs and colored pillows. Besides other small fancies and [a lamp] hanging from ceiling."

The earliest photograph we have of the Egypt float is dated 1904 and indicates a very close copy of the Mardi-gras vehicle. The persons riding the float are less numerous than was suggested. The table (Tabourette) is missing and the ladies are sitting on benches, not on the floor. Also, they apparently eschewed the chibouk (water-pipe), no doubt as a concession to the sensibilities of the midwestern audiences.







Egypt float in its original configuration on Ringling Bros. cr. 1903. Albert Conover negative.

Milwaukee Ornamental Carving charged \$265.00 for the carvings on the wagon (the most expensive of any of them) and \$20.00 for drawings for millwork which was done in the Moeller shop.

The float paraded 1903-1910 and then was disassembled. Some its carvings were used on the Egypt float tableau which was built in the winter of 1910-11. Both Egypt and India were so re-

placed, the theory apparently being that a tableau that could carry baggage was more appropriate than a float. Photos of the Egypt tableau show the sphinxes and decorative columns from the float. Also, the housing was dismantled and applied to the sides of the new tableau.

The Egypt paraded at least through 1920. It probably rotted away at either Bridgeport or Sarasota. The Hertzberg collection has a wooden sphinx said to be from this wagon, but it appears to be much too small for that.

The correspondence cited here is now



Over the winter of 1910-1911 the Egypt float was rebuilt as a tableau wagon. Sphinxes, rear carved poles, and sides were transferred from the original float. Name board from older version was placed near unafon player. This wagon was pulled by camel hitch on Ringling Bros. in 1910s. C. P. Fox collection.

part of the Pfening Archives. The torn-out picture of the Mardi-gras float was with the correspondence. This writer delayed printing this piece, hoping that the origin of the tear-out would be discovered. On a visit to the antique shop of a relative, he found the original poster. It is such events that add to our confidence that eventually we will locate all our early circus material.

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